



Join the international day of protests against racism and fascism

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TORIES FALL APART OVER MAY'S BREXIT

BREAK THEIR RULE

CRACKS IN establishment politics are turning into chasms.

The gap between the chaos and cynical manoeuvres at Westminster and the lives of ordinary people is bigger than ever.

What we're seeing now is not just a crisis of a prime minister or the Tory party. It's a crisis of the undemocratic, unaccountable and remote way politics is done.

Theresa May, under a

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ANTI-FASCISM

Tommy Robinson rallies in Salford

AROUND 3,000 racists rallied in support of Tommy Robinson in Salford, Greater Manchester, last Saturday.

It brought together old school British Nazis, Ukip leader Gerard Batten and a minority from a younger demographic that looks to Donald Trump and the US alt right.

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CLIMATE CHANGE



'This is just the start'—climate school strikers

A NEW movement for climate justice has exploded onto the streets.

Twenty thousand school students walked out across Britain on 15 February to demand action on climate change.

We spoke to students who are preparing for their next strike on 15 March.

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BREXIT

Labour wrong to back referendum

THE LABOUR Party's left wing leaders have given in to pressure from the right to support calls for a second Brexit referendum.

Corbyn has been gradually backed into a corner by trying to defeat the Tories through parliamentary manoeuvres.

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THE THINGS THEY SAY

'Real determination'

Theresa May on EU leaders' approach to finding a way to make Brexit work

'Wake up'

Dutch prime minister Mark Rutte's message to May

'Sleepwalking into a no-deal scenario'

Rutte continues

'Still more to do'

May on Brexit

'If this were an application for a job as a chief executive, I would probably win it'

Former Cabinet minister David Davis

'The Tory party is destroying itself'

Sarah Wollaston, one of three MPs who defected from the Conservative Party

'Hate going on rumours but is it too late to persuade you to stay? Love and best wishes DC'

Last-minute plea made by former prime minister David Cameron in a bid to stop the Tory defections



Spy chief quit after cops found abuser's reference

THE FORMER boss of spook headquarters GCHQ resigned his post after police investigators found that he gave a character reference in support of a paedophile priest who went on to re-offend.

But the government then hid the information. Robert Hannigan stood down in 2017 after less than three years as director of the spy agency, citing "family reasons". Never believe a briefing about "intelligence" should be a rule for journalists.

It emerged last week that his departure came after the National Crime Agency discovered he had helped a close family friend to avoid a custodial sentence for possessing 174 indecent images of children.

The priest, Father Edmund Higgins, was convicted in 2013 but his eight month sentence was suspended after Hannigan provided the character reference.

Five years later, last June, Higgins was jailed for 31 months after being caught boasting online of his sexual

ROBERT HANNIGAN former boss of GCHQ

interest in babies.

When his house was raided, police found more than 800 illegal images, 201 of which were in the most severe category. Higgins admitted possessing and making child abuse images.

Hannigan, who trained to be a priest before entering the civil service, said that he gave the reference "in good faith" a year before his appointment

as director of GCHQ and admitted that his judgment had been "completely wrong".

When Hannigan announced his resignation in January 2017 government briefings at the time said that he would be caring for sick relatives.

Hannigan is now a cybersecurity consultant in the private sector, including for Hiscox, the insurer.

PHOTOS OF a property on Reichsmove Rightmove, which included a Nazi iconography and a mural with the words "vote BNP", have been removed by the estate agent. Pictures of the property in Didcot, Oxfordshire, showed the giant poster which portrayed former British National Party (BNP) leader Nick Griffin as Adolf Hitler.

THE QUEEN has lodged appeals against a "punitive" business rate increase on her land at Balmoral. Changes to the Land Reform Act by the Scottish government removed the exemption for land used for shooting and deer-stalking, meaning the Queen was handed a £16,800 bill.

The Sun hails Barbie as inspirational

THE HATED Sun newspaper chose to make a fuss of the 60th anniversary of Barbie this week.

It found a handful of women to talk about their love of the doll and dress up as variations of Barbie.

In a two-page spread the Scum celebrated the fact that, even as Barbie turns 60, she "doesn't have a wrinkle in sight".

But just in case you got the impression her appearance is the most important thing, the Scum also hailed how she is now "more diverse than ever".

There are Barbies of different races and size—although most remain white and skinny—but no

"wrinkly, grey Barbie". Heaven forbid.

The quotes collected by the newspaper were meant to be positive but they just reinforced sexism.

One woman explained how she had to wear contact lenses "to enlarge my pupils" to look like Barbie. Another said Barbie is a "really good role model" as she "has houses and cars and boats".

Government admits to sending soldiers to Syria

THE MINISTRY of Defence has finally confirmed that British troops have taken part in the war in Syria.

This is despite a parliamentary vote in 2015 that only approved airstrikes, and a government assurance that it would "not deploy UK troops in ground combat operations inside Syria".

The admission came in response to a freedom of information request about the death of an SAS soldier, Sergeant Matt Tonroe, who was killed in Syria last year. "British forces embedded in the armed forces of

other nations operate as if they were the host nation's personnel, under that nation's chain of command," the ministry said. More than two dozen medals have been awarded to British soldiers in the past four years for their "heroism in action" in Syria. At least 65 British soldiers were fighting there this month.

Matt Tonroe

Brexageddon nonsense 1

AN EXCLUSIVE women's health club whose members include Princess Eugenie and Pippa Middleton Delevingne has closed.

Bosses at the £5,500-a-year Grace Belgravia have blamed Brexit. In a statement they said, "One of the other serious and continuing consequences of Brexit has also been the loss of some high spending members who have relocated."

As well as a gym, spa, Turkish bath, restaurant and bar, there was a medical centre run by the Queen's GP Dr Tim Evans.

Brexageddon nonsense 2

BREXIT means thousands of corpses awaiting repatriation to their homelands would pile up across the country in the event of a no-deal Brexit, according to conveniently leaked Cabinet Office projections.

Hundreds of bodies are sent every day to other countries from ports and airports, particularly Heathrow.

A Cabinet Office source claimed one of the key pressures faced during the Icelandic volcanic ash crisis in 2010, when airspace was closed for six days, was a backlog of bodies waiting to be flown home.

Is Labour all cracked up?

LABOUR MP Jess Phillips explains, "So the Labour Party is cracking. It's not yet enough to call it a split but the glaze on our industrially-built Stoke pottery jug has had spidery lines etched through it for some time, and now a dirty great fissure has opened up in the spout and the handle is about to give way."

"At this point, a master craftsman could still repair it."

"The alternative is to give up the ghost and smash it into tiny pieces" That's cleared that up.

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Cuts fights trigger crisis for Labour in Birmingham

by SARAH BATES

BIRMINGHAM SAW hundreds of workers strike together last week against attacks from their Labour council.

Bin workers struck on Tuesday and Friday of last week and home care workers walked out last Friday and Saturday.

And workers' action is prompting a growing political crisis inside the Labour Party.

Unite and Unison union members who are part of the refuse service were set to take further strikes on Wednesday and Thursday of this week.

Chris, a striker at the Lifford Lane depot, told Socialist Worker that strikers were "flabbergasted" to be attacked so brutally by a Labour council.

"We'd expect it from a Tory council, but not from a Labour council," he said.

Some 355 workers are fighting "secret payments" of an estimated £3,500-£4,500 made to GMB union members.

GMB members didn't join in with strikes in 2017 against job cuts and attempts to make workers to reapply for a lower skilled role.

Training

Chris said the safety training of experienced workers is important. "They're in charge of the safety aspect of the vehicle," he said.

A lot of people are experienced at driving bigger vehicles, but they're not used to the reversing aspect of it. "On some of the residential rounds we're doing 150 reverses a day".

A bin worker for almost three decades, Chris explained that the "service has been deteriorating for 30 years due to chronic mismanagement".

He said that there are "not enough workers and not enough vehicles"



STRIKERS ON the picket line

PICTURE: BIRMINGHAM SWP

to cover the rounds. And to meet requirements, the council is hiring out wagons from a private company.

The inadequate service means residents are frustrated that their rubbish isn't being picked up.

Chris said that bin workers "get a terrible amount of flak".

"But we just want to deliver the

service and want the tools to do the job," he added.

The strike is overwhelmingly supported by workers.

Only four refuse wagons left the Lifford Lane depot on last Friday's strike.

And strikers report it's a similar picture at all the depots. Striking

home carers joined bin workers picketing all four depots. Around 280 Unison union members have been striking for over a year against a series of attacks.

The low paid, predominately women workers are trying to stop brutal cuts that would see them lose up to £4,000 a year.

The council leadership shows no sign of stopping—and it has attempted to seek an injunction to stop bin workers from staging last week's strikes.

In a move that further deepened the division in Birmingham Labour, the cabinet threatened to impose attacks on the home care workers last week.

Labour's West Midlands regional board voted overwhelmingly to refer cabinet leader Ian Ward or his deputy Brigid Jones to Labour's national executive committee (NEC).

Investigate

It wants the NEC to investigate whether Ward or Jones have broken any Labour Party rules over their treatment of workers.

Some 23 Labour councillors sent an explosive letter to the council blasting the leadership's handling of the disputes.

It said Ward's regime was "a particular approach to industrial relations which gives rise to confrontation and disharmony".

Both disputes are long running and involve key groups of council workers. It's a nightmare for the Labour council. It is attacking its own workers—some of who are among the lowest paid—so they can deliver Tory austerity.

Workers need to be ready to step up the action to win

Workers' names have been changed.

Bin workers are due to strike 28 February and on 4, 8, 12, 13, 21 and 22 March

Stansted 15 face a new 'cruel' trial

THE STANSTED 15 group of protesters have been ordered back to court over an incident for which they have already been punished.

The group was convicted under terror legislation for stopping a deportation flight at Stansted Airport in March 2017.

Twelve received community service orders and three received suspended sentences.

All will now face trial in April for the charge of "aggravated trespass" at Essex magistrates court.

The group originally faced this charge—before the Crown Prosecution Service upped the stakes by trying to prosecute them under the Maritime and Aviation Security Act.

Vindictive

A statement from the Stansted 15 slammed the decision to drag them back to court as "cruel and vindictive".

"After spending well over half a million pounds on prosecuting and convicting us of a piece of draconian terror-related legislation, it's playing cold-hearted games with our lives," they said.

The Stansted 15 case exposes the brutality of Britain's racist immigration system of detention and deportation.

And it shows how the Tories will try to clamp down on anyone who tries to challenge it.

The statement said the group faces a "malicious prosecution".

"Our current immigration system is vicious—that's why we will not stop standing together to challenge it," said the defendants.

Say no to ban on Hizbollah

HOME SECRETARY Sajid Javid, in his ongoing grandstanding campaign to be Tory leader, has declared Lebanese group Hizbollah a terrorist organisation.

MPs were likely to debate the proposed ban as Socialist Worker went to press.

Hizbollah was founded during the Lebanese civil war in 1985 and defeated Israel when it invaded Lebanon in 2006. More recently it sent fighters to back pro-regime forces in the Syrian war.

Javid also banned African groups Ansaroul Islam and Jamaat Nusrat

al Islam Wal-Muslimin because they "threaten our safety and security". Though quite how remained a mystery.

A Labour Party briefing last January opposed a push for Hizbollah to be banned because

party leaders wanted to "encourage" it "down an effective democratic path". And until now, British governments resisted proscribing the organisation on the basis that it has formed part of Lebanon's government.

Mostly this is an effort to highlight the Labour leadership's supposed sympathy for Hizbollah.



A Hizbollah flag

Breakfast in



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For updates and analysis on the stories that matter go to socialistworker.co.uk/breakfastinred

IN THIS WEEK

1971

Unofficial action for union rights

UP TO 1.5 million workers joined unofficial walkouts across Britain against the Industrial Relations Bill.

The Tory law aimed to make it harder for workers to strike, and to clamp down on trade unions.



Salford rally for Tommy Robinson shows far right threat

by TOMÁŠ TENGYEL-EVANS

AROUND 3,000 fascists and racists rallied in support of Tommy Robinson in Salford, Greater Manchester, last Saturday.

The Nazi figurehead had called the demo outside the BBC Media City offices ahead of a Panorama documentary about him.

It brought together old school British Nazis, Ukip leader Gerard Batten and a minority from a younger demographic that looks to Donald Trump and the US alt right.

Around 600 people joined a counter-mobilisation organised by Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) and Unite Against Fascism.

Robinson is unsure about how to regroup the far right after a 10,000-strong anti-fascist mobilisation outnumbered a “Brexit Betrayal” march in London last December. It had been organised jointly by Robinson and Ukip.

The rally outside the BBC was built on a politically hazy basis. It was billed as a screening of “Panodrama”, a film targeting the “globalist” agenda of the BBC, playing on far right and antisemitic themes.

Among the crowd were people near the stage with T-shirts branding the BBC the “Bolshevik Broadcasting Corporation”.

Politiciase

But Robinson is also looking at a potential lash-up with Ukip. He told the crowd that the movement had to politicise. “No one will take notice until we start to see take their seats,” he said to loud cheers.

And he also announced that he was starting a new media venture with Australian alt-right figure Avi Yemini—who calls himself the “world’s proudest Jewish Nazi”.

Chants of, “Nazi scum, off our streets” rang out from the counter-protest on the other side of the building. It brought together Labour Party members, other

BACK STORY

Nazi Tommy Robinson staged a rally in Salford last Saturday

● Old school British Nazis, Ukip leader Gerard Batten and backers of Donald Trump joined it

● The rally was in protest at a BBC Panorama documentary about Robinson

● There were a number of racist incidents and mobilisations in the area in the run-up to the rally

● Robinson’s rally was smaller than he had hoped for—but it shows the far right is still a threat

socialists, trade unionists and students.

Salford Labour councillor Kate Lewis pointed to racist incidents in the run-up to the far right rally. They included “No blacks” being sprayed onto a Congolese family’s door in Salford.

“You’ve got racist graffiti that looks back to the times of colonialism,” she told Socialist Worker.

Far right “Yellow Vest” protesters have been organising in nearby Manchester city centre in recent weeks. They have targeted a picket line by rail workers in the RMT union, and Socialist Worker and SUTR campaigning stalls.

Alina has been part of mobilising against the Yellow Vests in Manchester. She told Socialist Worker, “I wear the niqab and one person said, ‘Take it off’, because they wanted to film my face.”

She added, “I am wearing it because it is my choice. I can choose what to do and I know I should be here.”

Robinson’s demo shows the far right is still a danger.

SUTR national demonstrations in London, Cardiff and Glasgow on Saturday 16 March can boost the anti-racist movement.



UP TO 3,000 people rallied in support of Nazi Tommy Robinson in Salford, Greater Manchester, last Saturday (above) Around 600 protesters joined an anti-racist protest to oppose the rally (left)

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

Trade union conference debates how to push back racism at work

SOME 200 people took part in debates at a Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) trade union conference last Saturday.

The day involved serious discussions on challenging institutional racism, defending freedom of movement and resisting attempts to force public sector workers to check immigration documents.

Speakers talked about how trade unions can challenge institutional racism in the workplace.

Bus driver Marcia Carty described how bosses at her company Metroline had threatened to sack her for wearing Rastafarian colours at work.

“I didn’t expect this,” she said. “The people that were challenging me were all the big bosses.”

Carty eventually won out.

Andrew Thompson, a bin worker in West Yorkshire, told of how he and his workmates struck against racism by a manager.

Other speakers discussed what institutional racism means.

Wif Sullivan from the TUC union federation said it’s about



At the trade union conference

how workplace and society structures “are set up to exploit people on the basis of race”.

Rania Hafez, a UCU union member, cited the Prevent programme which targets Muslims for surveillance.

“We have been othered by an official policy—brought in by a Labour government,” she said.

Brian Richardson from SUTR said that racism “is alive and kicking” in all institutions of society today.

A session on defending migrants’

rights and freedom of movement saw a debate on how to resist implementing immigration status checks in the health services.

Rosa Crawford from the TUC said workers could “be proactive” about how they define a person needing emergency care. Patients don’t need to prove their status before emergency treatment.

A Labour councillor from Coventry said, “If you have any issues like this contact your councillors and hold them to account. They should be standing up on this.”

Others spoke about building collective campaigns to resist the checks.

One paramedic described how an east London campaign scored a “partial victory” by forcing Barts Health trust bosses to drop an ID check pilot scheme.

Another health worker said, “We have to build a campaign that says, we will not implement this.”

“We have to defend people who are disciplined over it—and have the backing of our trade unions.”

Nick Clark

Hypocrisy lies behind the attack on Shamima Begum

TORY HOME secretary Sajid Javid last week stripped Shamima Begum of British citizenship to stop her returning from Syria.

Shamima Begum, Amira Abase and Kadiza Sultana left Tower Hamlets, east London, in 2015.

The secondary school pupils went to join Isis, a reactionary, sectarian outfit fighting against Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad.

Right wingers see the Begum case as an opportunity to bolster racism and the state’s powers over Muslim people in Britain.

Governments cannot make citizens stateless under international law.

But Javid tried to claim that Begum could be entitled to dual citizenship, as her family are of Bangladeshi origin.

Bangladesh officials say she will not be given citizenship.

Begum’s family have said they will appeal Javid’s decision in the courts.

The withdrawal of citizenship is a huge punishment, delivered without trial, but almost routinely used



Shamima Begum

by the British state (see below). Begum is now stateless and with no rights or home.

Right wingers have latched onto her remarks about the horrific bombings at Manchester Arena in May 2017.

The Daily Mail newspaper claimed Begum had said the bombing was “justified” because of Western airstrikes.

In fact she said that at the time she had accepted Isis’s line that the Manchester bombing was justified as form of retaliation.

She went on to say that it wasn’t “fair” on the women and children killed in Manchester.

It is hypocritical for those who backed mass slaughter in the Middle East to denounce violence.

Had it not been for the Iraq war, there would have been no Isis for Begum to join.

Many liberals fall into the trap of seeing a division between “good” and “bad Muslims”. With those, such as Begum, deserving to feel the full force of the law if they return to Britain.

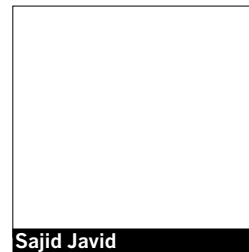
But any Muslim who dares to question British foreign policy is considered a “bad Muslim” by the British state. Accepting the division only helps to entrench racism against Muslims.

Tories’ threats to citizenship

CHANGES to the law in 2002 allowed the home secretary to deprive dual-nationality Britons of their citizenship on national security grounds without any prior approval from the courts.

The law was made even harsher under the Tories in 2014.

In 2015 then home secretary Theresa May deprived five



Sajid Javid

people of their British citizenship on alleged terror-related grounds.

She stripped 33 individuals of British nationality between

2010 and 2015.

Javid has now gone further by saying the possibility, not the reality, of dual citizenship is enough to remove citizenship.

He may lose in the courts.

But he will gather favourable media coverage and use it to prove his right wing credentials to the Tory party’s racist base ahead of a leadership election.

Labour shift on racist scheme

LABOUR councils have pledged to withdraw from a scheme targeting migrants following an outcry.

Councils had allowed Home Office staff to sit in on meetings between council workers and migrant families

seeking help.

The staff could pass information to immigration officials, potentially leading to deportations.

The scheme shows how the Tory “hostile environment” makes it hard for migrants to access basic services.

Damien Egan is the Labour mayor of Lewisham in south east London, one of the councils to remove the officials.

He said the council wanted “to reassure vulnerable migrants that Lewisham will support them”.

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

TORIES FALL APART OVER BREXIT—BREAK THEIR RULE

>>>continued from page 1

barrage of big business demands to rule out a no-deal Brexit, performed a screeching U-turn from her previous policy this week.

May had insisted for months that Britain would leave the EU on 29 March without a deal if none was agreed. On Tuesday she offered MPs the chance to block a no-deal Brexit.

On 12 March MPs will be given a “meaningful vote” on whatever changes to her deal May can claim to have extracted from the EU.

The deal was already rejected by 230 votes in January.

If MPs reject her deal again, May would give them yet another vote. This would decide whether to press ahead with a no-deal Brexit on 29 March or to opt for “a short extension” to the exit process.

May’s collapse follows threats of a mass revolt at the heart of the government. According to the Daily Mail newspaper, a secret meeting of 23 ministers took place on Monday night.

It reported that up to 15 said they would resign if May didn’t take away the drive towards a no-deal Brexit.

May’s retreat might buy off

some of the critics—but it won’t solve any of her problems.

Why will a three or six month extension make a rotten deal more acceptable?

But what’s guaranteed is that delaying Brexit will be seen as a betrayal by many Tory MPs and most of the party’s members.

Last Saturday the Conservative National Convention—a meeting of top local officials—overwhelmingly passed a motion calling for no delay to Brexit.

And even before May had made her announcement on Tuesday, Plymouth Tory MP Johnny Mercer waded in bitterly.

“You’ve had ministers happily taking home their salary and

“**Why will a three or six month extension make a rotten deal more acceptable?**

ministerial cars saying ‘No deal is better than a bad deal’,” he said. “But when it comes closer ‘No, we’re going to do something else’.”

It’s not just the Tories who are in chaos. Labour has said it will back a second referendum if its own plan for Brexit is defeated this week (see page 20).

It’s a response to pressure from big business and the Labour right, and comes after nine Labour MPs defected from the party.

It’s dressed up as concern for jobs and as listening to Labour members. But in reality Labour’s leaders have crumbled to demands from bosses, bankers and right wing Labour MPs.

What will happen if Labour is in government and faces infinitely more ferocious pressure from the rich and powerful?

There is no solution through juggling parliamentary arithmetic or by trying to be acceptable to ruling class forces.

Working class people will have to get rid of the Tories through their own struggles.

The alternative is to let the Tories wreck our lives while Labour and the union leaders simply observe the carnage.

CHAGOS ISLANDS SHAME

SOME OF the longest-suffering victims of Britain’s colonial past managed to embarrass its rulers in front of the world this week.

The United Nations’ highest court ruled on Monday that Britain should hand the Chagos Islands—a small group of islands in the Indian Ocean—back to its former colony Mauritius.

That’s a blow to Britain and a boost for the people who were expelled from their homes on the islands over 50 years ago and

are fighting to return. The Labour Party is responsible for their expulsion.

Harold Wilson’s government in 1966 had the islands “swept and sanitised” of their inhabitants to make room for a US military base.

What that meant was the Chagossians—the “Tarzans and Man Fridays” as one foreign office mandarin called them—were forced onto boats and deported.

They were dumped on Mauritius to live in poverty. Some have since moved to Britain. But

they have always fought to get back.

Successive governments have been determined to keep them out. They’re more interested in staying friendly with the US than they are in delivering justice.

The islands have been used as a US airbase and a place for the US to rendition—and torture—people as part of the war on terror.

And, despite the ruling, that’s why Britain still refuses to give the islands back.

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ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Antisemitism is key for far right ideology

IT IS now established in the neoliberal mainstream as an unquestionable fact that left antisemitism is a major problem.

This has been more or less taken for granted in the media coverage of the rump of right wing MPs who have split from Labour. But it was also strongly expressed by French president Emmanuel Macron speaking after the right wing writer Alain Finkielkraut had suffered antisemitic abuse on the fringes of a Yellow Vests march.

The way the charge of left antisemitism has been thoroughly used by the Labour right doesn't mean that we should simply ignore it. Does the left have a problem with antisemitism?

Answering this question requires a proper understanding of modern antisemitic ideology. Alongside revolting racist stereotypes, it is a theory that makes the problems of the world a product of a Jewish world conspiracy. This is located especially in international finance, but manipulates behind the scenes in the politics, the media, universities, and so on.

Once you begin to look at the ideology you understand why the German socialist leader August Bebel called antisemitism the "socialism of fools". It permits a superficial critique of capitalism, where the problem is not the system itself but the distortions produced by a racialised conspiracy.

By contrast, Marx argued what's wrong with capitalism lies in its very nature, and in particular in the exploitation of wage labour by capital—irrespective of the colour or religion of either capitalist or worker. In *Capital*, Volume I, he treats capitalists as "the personifications of economic categories, the bearers of particular class relations and interests".

This is why antisemitism has been largely the property of the far right. It allows them to posture as anti-capitalists, while displacing the contradictions of the system onto a racialised minority. It was this ideology that led to the Nazis to perpetrate the Holocaust, but we can see it at work today in the far right's obsession with the liberal Jewish billionaire George Soros.

Does this mean that people with broadly left wing values are never antisemitic? No, the more individuals stray away from Marx's conception of capitalism as a system of impersonal domination and succumb to the temptation of conspiracy theory, the more they can become open to antisemitic ideas. A contemporary example of such a logic is the myth that Israel mounted the 9/11 attacks.

Campaigning

This kind of conspiracy theory, alongside cruder antisemitic slurs, should be combated wherever they emerge. But they have nothing to do with the politics of Jeremy Corbyn, with his history of anti-racist and anti-imperialist campaigning, let alone that of the Marxist left.

The contemporary charge of left antisemitism has two functions. The first is to put the radical left onto the defensive. We can see this now, as Labour right wingers, often with terrible records on immigration, pose as "anti-racists".

The second is to make criticism of Israel illegitimate, if not actually illegal. So Macron said, "Anti-Zionism is one of the modern forms of antisemitism." He plans to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism. This definition makes it antisemitic to call the state of Israel "a racist endeavour".

This is despite the considerable historical evidence to support this claim, and despite the odious racist statements frequently made about Arabs by Israeli politicians.

The equation of antisemitism and anti-Zionism helps to render invisible the systematic oppression of the Palestinians by Israel. If entrenched, it would make solidarity with their struggle politically impossible.

In a peculiar way there is a convergence here between the neoliberal centre and right wing "populists" that the likes of Macron profess to loathe. Much of the far right today support Israel. This is because they are Islamophobes who rightly see Israel as a bulwark of Western domination of the Middle East.

But antisemitism remains crucial to far right ideology today because it allows criticisms of big business that do not cut to the heart of the capitalist system. Targeting left antisemitism lets the real antisemites off the hook.

EX-LABOUR MP Joan Ryan (front, left), arm in arm with Tory defectors

A right wing Labour split to attack Corbyn and Palestine

by NICK CLARK

RIGHT WING Labour MPs are using accusations of antisemitism up ramp up the pressure on Jeremy Corbyn.

Deputy leader Tom Watson has tried to characterise a split by nine Labour MPs last week as driven by antisemitism inside the party.

He wants to suggest there has been a rise in antisemitism inside Labour caused by its left wing membership—and by extension Corbyn.

A group of seven Labour MPs initially resigned last week to form a new group in parliament, along with three Tory defectors.

Two more Labour MPs—Joan Ryan and Ian Austin—quit Labour two days later and joined the Independent Group.

Both Ryan and Austin cited alleged antisemitism in the Labour Party. Both have shown that their understanding of antisemitism includes criticism of Israel such as branding it an apartheid state or discussing the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

In a resignation statement, Ryan linked antisemitism to opposition to Israel. She complained that Corbyn had tried to "preserve the right of antisemites to label Israel a 'racist endeavour'".

And at a fringe meeting at Labour Party conference last

year, Austin branded people who call Israel racist as a "poison that's been brought into the party."

The idea is to link antisemitism to opposition to Israel in order to accuse the left of being naturally antisemitic.

Giving in to this argument would be disastrous.

Watson announced live on national television on Sunday that he had a dossier of 50 cases of alleged antisemitism by Labour members. He said he wanted Corbyn to deal with them all personally. He hoped to trap Corbyn.

Tom Watson laid a trap

If Corbyn refuses to handle them personally, he can be accused of tolerating antisemitism.

If he takes them on, the only conclusion acceptable to right wing MPs would be expulsion for all 50 cases. That would effectively mean Corbyn having to concede that Labour has a problem of widespread antisemitism, and that his leadership is the cause of it.

Despite this one of Corbyn's key allies—Momentum founder Jon Lansman—said on national radio on Monday morning that Labour had "a much larger number of people with hardcore antisemitic opinions". He added that this was "polluting the atmosphere".

Lansman also led calls last year for Labour to accept a definition of antisemitism that restricted legitimate criticism of Israel.

He hoped that this would end accusations of antisemitism against the left. But it only opened the left up to further smears and attacks.

The best response to the slew of claims about antisemitism is to stand firm on the insistence that it is not antisemitic to call Israel racist—and to go on the offensive over Palestine.

Benefit rules broken

THE government breached its rules over its treatment of a disabled benefit claimant who killed herself after her payments were stopped.

Jodey Whiting from Teesside took her life in 2017. Her

Employment and Support Allowance payments had been stopped after she missed an assessment.

She was suffering with pneumonia when she missed the

appointment. An inquiry found that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) breached procedures and ordered the DWP to pay £10,000 in compensation.

Jodey suffered multiple physical and mental health issues.

Her mother Joy Dove has called for officials involved to be prosecuted. "No one should go through this. They pushed her to it," she said.

Jodey Whiting



On other pages

Corbyn backs down on Brexit >>Page 20

Venezuelan crisis grows amid border showdown

As the right exploits the social crisis, it's make or break time for left winger Nicolas Maduro, says **Alistair Farrow**

VENEZUELAN opposition leader Juan Guaido is using the country's spiralling social crisis in his bid to oust president Nicolas Maduro.

Guaido, a neoliberal supported by the US and big business, organised aid trucks to come across from Colombia and Brazil.

At least four people were killed in confrontations at the border.

Guaido hoped to tap into ordinary people's anger at the hardships they've suffered since Venezuela's economic crisis began in 2014.

The crisis has seen some three million people flee the country.

Guaido claimed that hundreds of thousands of protesters would force the aid through, but those numbers did not turn out.

And he announced that a truck had made it across Venezuela's border with Brazil border—just before it was turned back by troops.

Sanctions

The US has called on Maduro to let the aid in, much of it flown by US planes into Colombia.

Yet it remains committed to brutal economic sanctions, which have made the effects of the economic crisis far worse.

The US's intentions were revealed last week in a statement by Donald Trump's national security adviser John Bolton.

"It will make a big difference to the United States economically if we could have American oil companies invest in and produce the oil capabilities in Venezuela," he said.

Venezuela has the largest proven oil reserves in the world. The US has been held back from getting its hands on Venezuela's oil by Maduro's alliances with rival imperialist powers Russia and China.

Those alliances show signs of coming undone. Russia is vulnerable to US sanctions and could move its support to Guaido, who has claimed to be in dialogue with the state's representatives.

It's a warning that manoeuvres at the top of society will not

MORE ONLINE

Read Socialist Worker's analysis on what's behind the crisis for Venezuela and Latin America

● Latin America and the rise of the right
bit.ly/EbbOfPinkTide

● Does the crisis in Venezuela show that socialism can't work?
bit.ly/VenezuelaSoc

● Venezuela, struggle and the left
bit.ly/VenezuelaInterview

protect working class people from a return to the rampant neoliberalism represented by Guaido.

The clashes last Saturday showed that Guaido does not enjoy widespread support among ordinary Venezuelans.

But, after years of betrayals and attacks on working class people, neither does Maduro.

And his ruling PSUV party demobilised the mass movement that propelled former president Hugo Chavez into office.

The Lima Group of right wing Latin American governments met in Colombia on Monday.

Regime

Guaido and US vice president Mike Pence joined the meeting.

Their aim is regime change in Venezuela. Colombian president Ivan Duque Marquez said, "We will consider on how to enhance the diplomatic blockade that will assist to the fall of the dictatorship."

These forces will not accept Maduro's offers to negotiate with Guaido and the US.

Only a return to the mass movement on the streets— independent of Maduro and the PSUV—can repel the US and Guaido's hopes of a right wing coup.



On other pages...

Labour—a party of conflict
>> Pages 14&15

AT LEAST four people were killed in clashes at the Venezuela-Colombia border

UNITED STATES

Striking teachers in California join growing revolt over pay and funding

AROUND 3,300 teachers in Oakland, California, began their fourth day of strikes on Tuesday.

Their struggle follows the impressive Los Angeles teachers' strikes and more walkouts in Colorado and West Virginia this year.

In Oakland teachers are demanding a 12 percent rise over three years along with reduced class sizes and more student services.

So far they have been offered a derisory 7 percent rise over four years.

That won't keep pace with inflation, but the Oakland Education Association union was yet to reject the offer as Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday.

Growing tension between teachers and their union leaders have been a common feature of the US teachers' strikes.

In West Virginia union leaders agreed a deal with bosses during a previous round of strikes last year.

It left some of the teachers' demands over pay and health care costs unresolved.

Workers walked out anyway

Teachers demand a living wage

in defiance of the union in some areas of the state.

The Republican-dominated state senate decided against voting on a bill to raise teachers' and other state workers' pay last Saturday.

Teachers are increasingly turning to strikes as a way of winning political fights. In West Virginia a key demand of the strike was to stop the introduction of seven charter schools—privatised institutions—in the state.

Education strikes in 2018 boosted the total number of work days lost to strikes to their highest number since 2007—1.5 million.

Some 485,000 workers walked out in 20 disputes—that's the highest number of workers involved in strikes since 1986.

By far the largest sector was education.

Strikes in 2019 could push the number of days lost to strike action even higher.

The potential for a national campaign against the privatisation of education is growing.

Donald Trump's education secretary Betsy DeVos is a multi-billionaire privatisation zealot with no educational experience, yet she is transforming education in the US.

Last year the Schott Foundation for Public Education released a report on public schools in the US.

It found that just three states had not introduced either a school voucher or charter schools scheme—both methods of privatising education.

The stakes could not be higher when it comes to the future of education in the US.

But teachers are leading the fight and showing how to resist Trump's agenda.

Sudanese regime is ramping up repression

Al-Bashir is resorting to increasingly brutal methods but the rebellion is not going away, writes **Charlie Kimber**

SUDANESE PRESIDENT Omar al-Bashir has proclaimed a year-long state of emergency.

It is a sign that, despite intense repression, he has not been able to crush the revolt against his rule that has been taking place since 19 December 2018.

Even as he swore in a new prime minister last Sunday, hundreds of protesters rallied in Omdurman, the twin city of Khartoum, against the state of emergency.

"We want to give the president a message that the latest measures will not deter us," said protester Sawsan Bashir. "Our aim is to overthrow this regime and we will do it."

Demonstrators chanted anti-government slogans in the Burri, Haji Yusef and Al Shejra districts of the capital, Khartoum.

"Protesters and police clashed in Burri, with demonstrators throwing rocks at police vehicles and policemen firing tear gas at them," a witness told the AFP news agency.

Demonstrators also rallied in the Red Sea city of Port Sudan in support of hundreds of workers at the docks. They have been striking against a government decision to transfer the container terminal to a private company.

Repression

In another indication of how he is relying on brute repression, Bashir has sworn in 16 army officers and two governors from the secret services as governors for the country's 18 provinces.

But protests are now taking place daily, with special efforts on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The regime is seeking to reduce their size by seizing leaders of the movement in advance.

On Thursday of last week 17 opposition leaders were arrested even before protests had begun.

However hundreds of people joined a demonstration to the presidential palace chanting, "Freedom, peace and justice" and, "The people want the fall of the regime".

BACK STORY

Omar al-Bashir uses ever-more repressive measures as he becomes increasingly desperate

● Some 17 opposition leaders were arrested last Thursday

● And 18 state governor posts were filled by army and secret service officers

● On Saturday protests took place in over 50 areas, according to trade unions

According to the Sudanese Professionals Association—doctors, teachers and others who have been at the forefront of the movement—on Saturday "protesters took to the streets in more than 50 areas".

Unleashed

There is major student unrest. A big protest took place at Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman on Saturday. On Monday the Bashir militias were unleashed to beat protesting students on the campus of the University of Medical Sciences and Technology in Khartoum.

Meanwhile, workers in major telecom companies, including Zain, MTN and Ericsson, staged sit-ins on Thursday of last week.

Telecom companies have limited access to social media since December as part of the crackdown on protests. Solidarity protests were planned for this Saturday in many parts of Britain and other countries.

An old Sudanese revolutionary song has become popular among detainees and protesters. It includes the line, "We sing in our prison as you tremble in your castle."

Bashir is in trouble. But guaranteeing his fall, and real change in the interests of workers and the poor, means looking to mass mobilisation for economic and political transformation.



On other pages...

Behind the scandal and protests rocking Haitian regime >>> **Page 17**

FRANCE

Yellow Vest struggle must spread to win

BIG YELLOW Vest protests took place in France again last Saturday, the 15th successive week of action.

Official figures said 46,000 took part including 5,800 in Paris—although protesters claim many more. 2,000 marched in Rennes and 2,500 in Clermont-Ferrand.

Police attacked many of the protests—in Paris they assaulted Yellow Vests who were on the escalators of a metro station.

The movement is not going away, but it needs to grow.

Three French trade union federations plus student and school student organisations have called for a national

strike on 19 March. It has similar demands to the one on 5 February which saw for the first time significant union backing for the Yellow Vest movement's aims.

Repression has been stepped up against strikers.

Striking postal worker Gael Quirante was brutally arrested by the CRS riot cops during a demonstration at the ministry of labour last week.

Gael's postal office has been on strike for almost 11 months over his dismissal and working conditions.

He is a member of the leadership of the revolutionary socialist NPA party. The NPA

SCENES FROM a rebellion. Protesters line the streets of Sudanese capital Khartoum on 7 February (above) and telecommunications workers walk out on strike (left)

Riot cops crack down on Saturday

said it "fully supports Gael and all strikers, and demands the immediate release of Gael, a victim of the government's ultra-repressive policy against any social protest".

India and Pakistan conflict over Kashmir

INDIA AND Pakistan are once more on the brink of terrible conflict.

And again the disputed and divided region of Kashmir is at the centre of a war of words traded by Indian and Pakistani political leaders.

At least 44 Indian paramilitary police were killed in a car bomb attack in Kashmir earlier this month. A Kashmiri militant group aligned with Pakistan-based jihadists claimed responsibility.

India's hard right prime minister Narendra Modi wasted no time in promising retaliation. He vowed to "avenge every tear" and said, "The

fire that is raging in your hearts is in my heart too."

Military chiefs and media armchair generals are only too pleased to oblige.

The governments of India and

Pakistan have no genuine interest in the lives of ordinary people in their countries, and neither do their backers in China and the US.

The only way out of the permanent round of military conflict is for ordinary people across South Asia to see they have more in common with each other than they do with their rulers.

That means giving Kashmiri people themselves the right to determine whether their state belongs in Pakistan, India or as an independent nation.

Longer online at bit.ly/KashmirWarDrive

Protesting for Kashmiri rights

No division on Grenfell

I SAW last Monday night's BBC Dispatches programme on the fire brigade's response to Grenfell fire.

As FBU union members and firefighters, we stand wholeheartedly in solidarity with the Grenfell survivors in their fight for justice.

This terrible tragedy had many causes.

Our response on the night saved lives. That does not mean we have nothing to learn. It does not mean training and policy cannot be improved.

But on the night we held nothing back.

Maintain the unity between firefighters and the victims of Grenfell.

Yusuf Timms
On Facebook

Unity with migrants

UNITE UNION general secretary Len McCluskey wrote an article in the New Statesman magazine last week where he opposed free movement of labour.

A couple of years ago I argued with Len at a union regional committee, and quoted a study that said migrants don't bring down wages.

Len will agree that we should blame bosses not workers. But we oppose immigration controls because we oppose everything that divides workers.

Sometimes the best fighters can be our colleagues who are recent migrants. And the answer is to get everybody in the union to support every struggle.

Gwyneth Powell-Davies
Bristol

Remember Solidarity

I ENJOYED reading Alex Callinicos's obituary for Colin Barker. Colin wrote a book on Solidarity, the Polish trade union that shook the Stalinist regime in the 1980s.

My Polish uncle joined Solidarity when he worked on the shipyard of Gdansk.

He had previously been sent to the Gulag prison camps by Stalin.

Anna Potrykus
Huddersfield



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

We should all get behind the climate strikers on 15 March

THE INSPIRING student climate strikes recently should be an example to all of us (Socialist Worker, 20 February).

In 2010 sixth form and college students protested in their tens of thousands.

Back then it was against the trebling of tuition fees and the abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance.

At Islington Sixth Form College in north London, our NUT union group met early in the morning of one of the big demos.

And, after a hard argument, we voted to walk out in support of our students.

At lunchtime, we walked out of the college gates with our union banner and marched down to Parliament Square to join the protests.

Wouldn't it be a great if this could happen in a number of schools and colleges during the next student climate strike on 15 March?

Of course, this won't be possible in lots of schools.

So maybe teachers there should hold solidarity protests in support of students outside the school gates before the school day begins or during the lunchtime break.

But things will not happen unless we argue for them.

And let's hope that this time teaching and support staff unions all come out publicly and back the striking students.

Ken Muller
North London

Sounding the alarm on climate change in Westminster

■WE ALL applaud the courage of the young people who took part in the climate strikes.

They have acted while others, some better placed to do so, have held back.

The risk to the students' education is serious. They are prepared to face this risk, but we should be looking for alternatives to mitigate that risk.

We have a responsibility to defend their education and to support their fight over climate change.

This is both a political and an economic battle.

It raises the question of power and control.

We should be looking for action from the trade unions in appropriate industries to act in

support and defence of our young people.

They are also in a position to call for and lead a generalised campaign.

This could be effective in mobilising a concerted effort to safeguard the future.

Ralph A Tebbutt
Kent

■GOOD ON the school climate strikers—our next generation.

What kind of world are we leaving them? What future are we setting them up for?

I hope they can do a better job than this generation of politicians who are a complete shower.

Sleepy Steve
On Twitter

Just a thought...

Jeff Koons's alienation

THE LAST words on the art of Jeff Koons should go to the late Australian art critic Robert Hughes.

"Jeff Koons is to Andy Warhol as the baby was to Rosemary", he wrote.

It was a reference to the horror film Rosemary's Baby, where she gives birth to the spawn of Satan, but it's not her fault.

Since that neat summing up, Koons has become famous not only for not making any of his work.

He has a factory full of workers doing that, but he has recently replaced many of them with robots.

They had tried to form a union in 2016, for which Koons sacked them.

So much for art as unalienated labour under capitalism.

Noel Halifax
East London

Hypocrisy on Begum case

IF SHAMIMA Begum was Christian and white, would people have the same reaction to the Tory government stripping her of British citizenship?

Alyson Black
On Facebook

■THE BRITISH government should hang its head in shame over the Shamima Begum case.

The very systems that were supposed to support young people failed her because of the Conservatives' ideological programme of savage cuts.

I do not support any attempt to strip this British citizen of her citizenship.

This must be contested in the courts here in Britain and in the European Union.

Michael Lewis
On Facebook

We need new by-elections

THE Independent Group of MPs were happy to leave the Labour Party (Socialist Worker, 20 February).

But they won't stand down and run in by-elections.

Yet they bang on for a "People's Vote".

The lot of them are absolute charlatans.

Deborah Keay
On Facebook

A new movement against climate catastrophe is growing across the world. **Sarah Bates** spoke to the school students who organised the first climate strike in Britain, and who are now preparing for the next round on 15 March

A NEW MOVEMENT for climate justice has exploded onto the streets. Twenty thousand school students walked out across Britain on 15 February to demand urgent action on climate change.

They struck alongside 50,000 school students across the globe as part of the first coordinated climate strike to include Britain. Organised by “Youth Strike 4 Climate”, it was part of the worldwide #FridaysforFuture movement.

It was the biggest ever climate strike in Britain—and larger than the school walkouts over the Iraq war in 2003. And now students plan to spread the action with another coordinated strike on 15 March.

Many strikers have never been politically active before and the experience left them elated. Cyrus Jarvis, Youth Strike 4 Climate logistics organiser, told Socialist Worker that the huge strike had left him feeling “amazing”.

“I feel confident and on top of the world,” he said. “It’s not just the organisers who feel like that but everyone who came to the strike.”

Westminster was awash with thousands of strikers spilling out from Parliament Square, demanding that traffic stopped.

Cyrus, who helped organised banner-making workshops in the lead-up to the action, was surprised at the turnout. “So many turned up we were struggling to keep control,” he said. “People just kept on coming and coming.”

“We couldn’t fit everyone in the area so people just marched off.”

Similar scenes were replicated in scores of other towns and cities.

Dylan, a 14-year-old student at Fairfield school in Bristol, struck alongside around 20 of his friends. “We need awareness of climate change but we also need ways of preventing it and stopping it,” he told Socialist Worker.

“If we don’t get this dealt with it’s going to get worse and worse.”

Many strikers were incredulous that they are expected to go to school when climate catastrophe is so close.

“You can get all the education you want,” said Dylan. “But if the world is ruined what are you going to use that education on?”

Urgency

A report by the UN’s IPCC body last year warned there are only 12 years left to limit temperature rises to 1.5 degrees. This is much less time than previously thought—and has fed into a sense of urgency in the new movement.

Student from east London Safia Shaikh said, “The future of our generation rests solely on mitigating climate change and treating it like it is.” She said that after 12 years “the world as we know it is lost”.

“We strike because we cannot allow our future to burn before our very eyes,” she explained.

This anger has led strikers to turn their fire to those at the top of



HOW IT STARTED

Frustration gave birth to a global movement

SWEDISH TEENAGER Greta Thunberg (above) probably didn’t know she would unleash a worldwide wave of climate strikes when she started her solo walkout last year.

Frustrated at the lack of action over climate change by the Swedish government, Greta protested outside the parliament. From September, she started just striking one day a week, and #FridaysForFuture was born.

It’s estimated that 70,000 struck across 30 countries on 15 February. There were walkouts in 270 cities in Sweden, Germany, Australia, Britain, Switzerland, Canada, Denmark and Finland. At a European Union conference last week Greta slammed “political leaders wasting decades through denial and inaction”.

“If you think we should be in school, then we suggest you take our place striking in the streets, and striking from your work, or better yet, join us so we can speed up the process,” she said.



society. Safia wants the Tories to stop supporting fracking and leave fossil fuels in the ground—a key demand of the movement.

“The large corporations and government policies may be making money now, but they are gambling with our future and they are losing,” she said. “We cannot allow our future to burn before our very eyes, we must at least try to stop it.”

While teachers’ unions haven’t backed the strikes, there have been some attempts to link up staff and student action.

Dylan said teachers should join in with the walkouts, but their participation should “depend” on how they behaved on the demonstrations. “I’d be fine with teachers striking, but not if they could sanction us at school because of something that happened on the demonstration,” he said.

Trade unionists and workers should take whatever action is possible to support students in this vital battle.

The school strikes are organised by a generation of young people who are told they only care about the perfect selfie or Fortnite video game. And it’s driven by the rage of young people who are patronised by a political elite that tries to kick action on climate change into the long grass.

With more strikes planned for 15 March, their action shows no sign of losing momentum. Cyrus said there is “massive potential” for their movement. “We will get what we want,” he said.

“It might not be soon, but we don’t have any intention of backing down.”

SCHOOL CLIMATE STRIKERS SAY...



THIS IS JUST THE START!

PICTURE IN GRAPHIC: JULIAN MEEHAN/FLOXX



SPEAKING OUT

‘We’re told that our opinions don’t matter’

FOR TOO long we have felt powerless in a political climate that is shifting to dangerous right wing ideologies. We, as young people, have been told for too long that our opinions don’t matter and that we ought to simply take what is handed to us.

This is extremely worrying when these decisions are being taken by an unrepresentative government.

This world is our future, and we have to take action to make our voices heard and establish the power of the people.

This strike ought to set a precedent. It will empower a generation that are drowning in a dangerous political climate. **Sarah Ainsley east London**

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY



Main pictures clockwise starting with centre graphic: School strike for climate in Melbourne, Australia; Hundreds joined the protest at Leeds; Walkout in Carlisle; and in Cambridge

Do even the rich have an interest in stopping climate catastrophe?

‘SYSTEM CHANGE not climate change’ is a popular slogan on the demonstrations. But what does it mean?

For some it means changes on a system-wide level. So, for instance, new rules and regulations would apply to all companies and countries around issues such as carbon emissions.

But for socialists, it means a break from the capitalist society that has created climate chaos.

Global warming started when fossil fuels began to be burned on a huge scale, around the time of the industrial revolution. And getting rid of the system will be central to any major breakthrough in tackling climate change.

Politicians and big business’s inaction over climate change stems from the fact that they are governed by the logic of profit.

Short-term decisions such as building an oil rig or constructing a fracking well can boost an individual firm’s profits. But the rich know they are creating the conditions for climate catastrophe. So why don’t they stop?

Complete

In the long-term they won’t be able to count their money on a dead planet. The answer is because competition is built into capitalism.

If bosses don’t compete with each other to grab a bigger slice of the profits, they will be driven out of business by their rivals.

Competition for resources creates a wasteful system. For instance, Fossil fuel multinationals spend decades competing to find more reserves of oil.

It makes sense for an oil tycoon, as they will have to explain how they are turning a profit to their shareholders. But it makes no sense for ordinary people or the planet to have billions of pounds poured into these efforts. Climate change is often

presented as a process that occurs many miles up by the ozone layer or deep under water. But it’s rooted in humans’ relationship with the Earth.

Right now, every day, natural finite resources such as oil and gas are being depleted, burnt and consumed. This has to stop if we’re going to build any future—let alone a sustainable one.

Frustration at lack of progress can lead to activists focusing on how individuals can change their behaviour. It could be mean encouraging others to be vegan, plastic-free or not having children.

But this isn’t enough. Even if everyone changed their behaviour overnight, we would still live on a planet powered by fossil fuels and organised for the rich’s benefit.

To take on capitalism, we have to fight collectively. This can appear more obvious for workers fighting for higher wages or better working conditions.

But it’s also true when thinking about the biggest threat we face—how to limit the most catastrophic elements of climate change.

That’s why the fight for the planet can’t just be about taming the worst elements of capitalism. It has to also be about building a sustainable, socialist society that’s based on the needs of people and planet, not profit.

Food system is under ‘severe threat’

A STARK report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation has warned that “the future of our food system is under severe threat”. Released last week, it said pollution, climate change and changes in land use were to blame.

The Earth’s population relies on a handful of animal and



SPEAKING OUT

We’re trying to get more out next time

‘WE MET up with strikers from another school and travelled to Leeds to join in with the mass rally outside the council chambers in the city centre.

Everyone came at it from a different angle, but we were all brought together over climate change.

When I returned to school everyone was really interested in the strike. They liked the idea of being around others with similar views and the level of camaraderie really appealed to people.

We’re going to try to get more out on 15 March—we’ll be speaking to societies at school.

On the trajectory we’re on at the moment, there’s no reason to let up. I got a detention, but I’ll do it again.’

Ewan Williamson York

plant species to produce the vast majority of food.

This makes the food production cycle vulnerable to disease and pests.

Urgent action is needed to provide environments where species can thrive, creating a sustainable future for humans.



Climate change already hits bean production

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER }
PUBLIC MEETINGS

DONCASTER

System change not climate change

Tue 12 Mar, 7.30pm,
Dreambakes,
3 Priory House,
Priory Walk,
DN1 1TS

LONDON:HACKNEY

Know your enemy—alt-right, the far right and fascists

Wed 3 Apr, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd),
E5 0PU

{ SOCIALIST WORKER }
BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local activities. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

How can Palestine be free?

Mon 4 Mar, 6pm,
The Snug,
Ma Cameron's,
6-8 Little Belmont St,
AB10 1JG

BARNLEY

20 years after the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry—have the police really changed?

Thu 14 Mar, 6.30pm,
Room 302, The Civic,
Hanson St, S70 2HZ

BIRMINGHAM

Capitalism in crisis—the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx

Wed 13 Mar, 7pm,
Birmingham LGBT Centre,
38/40 Holloway Circus,
B1 1EQ

COLCHESTER

Can the Labour Party bring real change?

Thu 28 Mar, 8pm,
Oyster Room, Hythe
Community Centre,
1 Ventura Drive,
CO1 2FG

COVENTRY

Venezuela—what's behind the coup attempt?

Wed 6 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Golden Cross,
8 Hay Ln,
CV1 5RF

HARLOW

Venezuela—what's behind the coup attempt?

Thu 14 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
1 Church Leys,
CM18 6BX

HUDDERSFIELD

100 years since Rosa Luxemburg's murder—the German Revolution

Wed 6 Mar, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade (near
both train and bus stations),
HD1 5JP

Women have been at the forefront of the fight against Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil

BIRMINGHAM & BLACK COUNTRY

Wed 6 Mar, 7pm,
West Bromwich Town Hall,
High Street,
B70 8DT

BRADFORD

Thu 7 Mar, 7pm,
Glyde House,
Little Horton Lane
(opposite the ice rink),
BD5 0BQ

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Thu 7 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Ship St,
BN1 1AF

BRISTOL

Wed 6 Mar, 7.30pm,
Café 99,
99 Queens Road,
BS8 1LW

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Wed 6 Mar, 7.30pm,
Red Triangle Cafe,
160 St James's St,
BB11 1NR

HULL

Know your enemy—alt-right, the far right and fascists

Thu 21 Mar, 7pm,
Cafe licious,
104 Cottingham Rd, HU6 7RZ

KENT

Women, resistance and revolution—fighting sexism and exploitation

Thu 7 Mar, 7.30pm,
Nucleus Arts Centre,
272 High St, Chatham,
ME4 4BP

CHESTERFIELD

Thu 7 Mar, 7.30pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St,
S40 1QN

GLASGOW

Thu 7 Mar, 7.30pm,
Broker Suite, Mercure
Glasgow City Hotel,
201 Ingram St,
G1 1DQ

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Thu 7 Mar, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LIVERPOOL

Thu 14 Mar, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
22 School Ln, L1 3BT

LONDON

Wed 6 Mar, 7pm,
Bloomsbury Central
Baptist Church,
235 Shaftesbury Avenue,
WC2H 8EP

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

Know your enemy—alt-right, the far right and fascists

Thu 7 Mar, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Lane,
Lancaster, LA1 1TX

LONDON: NEWHAM

A rebel's guide to Frida Kahlo

Wed 13 Mar, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove (next
to Morrisons car park),
E15 1HP

MANCHESTER: CENTRAL

Wed 6 Mar, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

NEWCASTLE

Thu 7 Mar, 7pm,
Floor 2, Commercial
Union House,
39 Pilgrim St,
NE1 6QE

NORWICH

Thu 7 Mar, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

NOTTINGHAM

Wed 6 Mar, 7pm,
International
Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Rd,
NG1 3FN

OXFORD

Thu 7 Mar, 7pm,
Oxford Town Hall,
St Aldate's,
OX1 1BX

LONDON: SOUTH

20 years after the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry—have the police really changed?

Wed 13 Mar, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd, SW2 1EP

LONDON: SOUTH EAST

20 years after the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry—have the police really changed?

Wed 13 Mar, 7pm,
Deptford Lounge,
9 Giffin St, SE8 4RH

PORTSMOUTH

Wed 6 Mar, 7.30pm,
Somerstown
Community Centre,
River's St,
PO5 4EZ

SHEFFIELD AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Thu 7 Mar, 7pm,
Central United
Reform Church,
60 Norfolk St,
S1 2JB

SWANSEA

Thu 7 Mar, 7pm,
Cinema & Co.,
17 Castle St,
SA1 1JF

YORK

Wed 6 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
YO1 9RL

LONDON: WEST & NORTHWEST

Sudan—revolution and the struggle against al-Bashir

Thu 14 Mar, 7.30pm,
Woodlane Community Centre,
78 White City Cl,
Shepherd's Bush, W12 7DZ

NOTTINGHAM

Politics of the mind—Marxism and mental distress

Wed 3 Apr, 7pm,
International
Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Rd, NG1 3FN

PLYMOUTH

Know your enemy—alt-right, the far right and fascists

Thu 21 Mar, 7pm,
Quaker House,
74 Mutley Plain, PL4 6LF

TELFORD

Know your enemy—alt-right, the far right and fascists

Wed 13 Mar, 7.30pm,
Carriages,
The Parade,
Wellington, TF1 1PY

WIGAN

Sudan—revolution and the struggle against al-Bashir

Thu 14 Mar, 7pm,
The Brocket Arms,
38 Mesnes Rd, WN1 2DD

{ STAND UP TO RACISM }

EAST LONDON

Unite against racism and fascism

Thu 7 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd),
E5 0PU

Speakers: Diane Abbott,
Kevin Courtney,
Weyman Bennett,
David Albrich

NATIONAL

UN Anti-Racism Day demonstration

Saturday 16 Mar, 12 noon,
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For more information, go to
bit.ly/16MarchDemo

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }

NATIONAL

Marxism 2019

4 July to 7 July
Central London
For more information, go to
marxismfestival.org.uk

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Resist the attempts to turn the screws on drill musicians

The ruling class say violence happens because of music, but they are deflecting blame from themselves, argues Love Music Hate Racism's **Zak Cochrane**

SIMPLE SOLUTIONS to complex problems are the holy grail for the political classes.

Violence in society comes from a number of places. Primarily it comes from the state, but sometimes it is ordinary people who are violent towards each other.

A few years ago we were told this was caused by video games. The latest culprit is drill music. The solution is, we are told, for the state to punish the creators.

Having emerged from the trap-style rap of Chicago, drill has quickly become popular among young people across Britain.

Last year the Metropolitan Police launched a "crackdown" on it, banning artists such as the 1011 group from making new material.

Cops had videos removed from Youtube.

There are undoubtedly violent and disturbing lyrics in some drill music.

Artists talk openly about settling scores with rival groups and using knives and guns.

Exclusion

Yet there is a refusal among the establishment to acknowledge violent lyrics as a symptom of social exclusion and alienation rather than simply a cause of gun and knife crime.

Popular drill artist Abra Cadabra said in an interview last year, "Targeting musicians is a distraction."

"The cuts that affect schools, youth clubs, social housing and benefits are making life harder for the average person living on or below the poverty line."

The artist Drillminister has



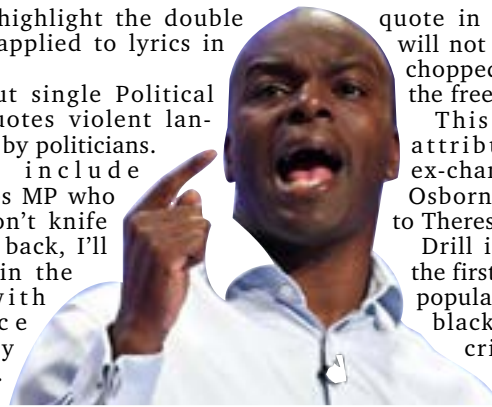
DRILLMINISTER (above) has attacked hypocrites such as the Tory London mayoral candidate **Shaun Bailey** (below)

sought to highlight the double standards applied to lyrics in drill music.

His debut single Political Drilling quotes violent language used by politicians.

These include Jess Phillips MP who said, "I won't knife you in the back, I'll knife you in the front" with reference to Jeremy Corbyn.

Another



quote in the song is "I will not rest until she's chopped up in bags in the freezer."

This was widely attributed to the ex-chancellor George Osborne in reference to Theresa May.

Drill is by no means the first genre of music popular among young black people to be criminalised. In the late 1980s there was a

powerful campaign to ban US rap music by artists such as NWA and 2 Live Crew.

In Britain during the early 2000s, grime experienced much of the same scrutiny as drill today. The Met Police introduced form 696 in response to the emergence of grime.

Assessment

This required promoters and licensees to complete a risk assessment of MCs and DJs three weeks before events.

The original version even asked for details of "ethnic groups" likely to attend a performance.

Today grime has become mainstream with huge artists such as Stormzy, AJ Tracey, Skepta and Lady Leshurr.

The genre has also become increasingly political.

Artists have spoken out on issues such as Grenfell, police brutality and encouraged support for Jeremy Corbyn.

It's possible drill music could move in a similar direction.

The ruling class has always feared and tried to control non-conformist subcultures.

This is why they call for bans on music and whip up a moral panic in the media.

It is understandable to feel dismayed when ordinary people kill each other.

This is the product of a system that breeds alienation and a sense of hopelessness. Drill music is a reflection of that system, not at odds with its values.

Banning it will do nothing to address the society that has created it.

THEATRE

DRIP DRIP DRIP

On tour until April
Performed by Pipeline Theatre
pipeline theatre.com

ON A hectic cancer ward, clinicians treat David Jeffs—patient, discredited academic, and "race scientist".

Jeffs is more interested in finishing his final lecture about a Nazi doctor hanged at Nuremberg, whose story now seems to be weaving into his.

And he's running out of time.

THEATRE

AND THE REST OF ME FLOATS

Until 16 March
Performed by Outbox Theatre
Bush Theatre, London W12 8LJ
bushtheatre.co.uk

THIS IS a bold and vibrant piece of theatre that feels like a celebration of gender fluidity.

It pushes boundaries and dares to break out of



And the Rest of Me Floats uses bold techniques to make its points

the structures of typical theatre.

LGBT+ actors use movement, stand up, dress up and pop songs to explore how it feels to live in a society where you are regularly categorised and policed.

This experimental piece was a breath of fresh air.

Pushed

It not only challenges the gender roles that get pushed on us, but also gives a voice to the difficulties that LGBT+ people face, particularly transgender people.

This is incredibly important as we see a growing polarisation in society that has produced a spike in transphobic attacks.

It's important to support any theatre that seeks to break out of the typical structures and that attempts to challenge the ideas which are used to try and divide us.

Jasmine Fischer

Story of race in the US leaves audience floundering

THEATRE

SHIPWRECK

Until 30 March
At the Almeida Theatre
London
almeida.co.uk

RACE AND class in Trump's America form the spine of this well-directed play.

There are strong performances throughout, especially from Fisayo Akinade who plays Mark, the pivotal role.

The title could be a reference to Shakespeare's

The Tempest. But it's hard to be sure, and that leaves a sense of frustration.

There is obvious symbolism, clunky metaphors and jarring puns.

Mark, although born in Africa, was adopted as a baby and grew up in an entirely white environment.

He has one foot in each of black and white America and is conflicted about his identity.

It is during Mark's speeches that Washburn's writing is at its best.

The same black actor who plays Mark also plays George W Bush.

This may be supposed to be edgy, but it comes across as silly.

At the end of the first half Bush and Trump fight. Trump the usurper is the victor and banishes a Republican dynasty.

The latter part of the play is completely different to the rest.

There are no more stagey performances or internal discussions about the nature of drama.

Trump appears as leader



Fisayo Akinade

of a cult. The epaulettes of his cloak form the white power hand symbol.

Sound design and a rotating stage are used effectively here and it is a real spectacle.

At the end of the play the two narratives are cleverly brought together as we realise that all the characters are in the imagination of just one.

Despite moments like this, Shipwrecks' dialogue still sounds like a transcript from a Democrat's dinner party.

Jay Williams

GOOD rid-dance. Now what?

Some of Labour's most hated MPs have left the party.

They include people such as Mike Gapes who hankers after Labour's warmongering past and Chris Leslie who raves about the dangers of Marxism.

Joan Ryan, who defends Israel's crimes against Palestinians, has also jumped ship.

They won't be missed by ordinary Labour members.

So maybe that means there are fewer right wing MPs left to cause trouble in the Labour Party for Jeremy Corbyn.

But they could still cause big problems. What happens if polls start to show the new Independent Group making inroads into Labour's vote?

A YouGov poll last Wednesday showed that within days of forming, the group had 14 percent support.

It took support from Labour, Liberal Democrats and the Tories.

But Labour suffered the biggest knock—mostly apparently from people who said they “don't know” how they would vote if the Independent Group was on the ballot paper.

Whatever you think about their reliability, polls have great influence on a party where everything is geared towards winning elections.

The argument will be that the independents are sapping votes from Labour and stopping it from winning.

So the leadership will be told it has to show it is listening to those voters—and that means effectively giving in to the right's demands.

That's linked to a second problem—the right wing MPs still left inside Labour.

The split has strengthened their hand.

Within hours of the split, deputy leader Tom Watson argued that Corbyn had to “address the reasons why good colleagues might want to leave”.

Threat

Several right wing MPs echoed Watson. It's really a threat—do what we want or we'll cause more splits and more divisions.

Many at the same time talked of Labour's “broad church”—the idea that the party can accommodate left and right. That veils another threat, this time to say the left has to tolerate the right in the party.

But it does refer to a real fact—that there has always been a split between left and right in Labour. And for most of Labour's history, it's the right who have called the shots.

Ever since Labour was formed it has tried to appease both the left and the right. It has a base of members and voters who look to it to deliver



WHY ARE Labour MPs leaving the party to join up with Tories?

LABOUR—A PARTY OF CONFLICT

Nick Clark argues that tensions inside Labour aren't a result of Corbynism, but of fundamental differences within a party that tries to both maintain and challenge the state



Tony Benn

progressive change, or even a socialist society. And it has at least a tenuous connection to the working class struggle for reforms through its relationship with the leaders of trade unions.

But it also has to deal with a pull in an entirely different direction.

For a start, getting elected means having to appeal to a wide spread of votes—in practice this means dropping some more radical rhetoric. Labour



Activists want to transform Labour through getting rid of 'Red Tories'

MPs often claim they're in parliament to represent views across society, not the working class or the left. That's why they talk about representing their constituents, not party members.

And then what happens when Labour gets elected? It has to take care of the state, the vehicle for delivering the reforms it promises.

But when taking care of the state means going to war to protect “Britain's interests abroad,”

or implementing austerity to keep the economy profitable for the bosses, Labour has always done so.

That pressure begins before Labour even enters office.

Right wing MPs accuse Corbyn of being a threat to national security, or making impossible promises.

What they really mean is that the promises he makes don't fit precisely with the interests of capitalism and the British state.

This contradiction is what causes the split between left and right in Labour.

Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein wrote about this in their history of the Labour Party.

“Labour voices working class aspirations but only to the extent that they can be fitted into the workings of the national state,” they said.

“The balance between the two factors is represented in the split between Labour's left and right—each side representing one aspect of the common reformist whole.”

Labour's left and right represent two faces of the party. But the fact that they are both Labour is an important one.

However close Labour MPs might be to the Tories—and however distant they are to their members—they are not simply Tories in the wrong party.

They're a product of the contradiction inside Labour and its orientation on parliament, the state and elections.

What's more, this focus tips the balance of power inside the party in their favour.

FOR LABOUR, the most important activity is that done by a relatively small group of people in parliament.

So a few hundred MPs have a level of power and influence inside Labour proportionately greater than the hundreds of thousands of its ordinary members.

Once MPs are elected it's very difficult for members to hold them to account.

At the same time, it's very easy for MPs to cause huge disruption—by rebelling for instance, or threatening to split. The threat of electoral disaster that this brings is usually enough for the right to blackmail the left into giving in.

A look at how Labour MPs have behaved ever since Corbyn was elected leader should be enough to show how effective that can be. One of his first defeats at the hands of the right was over Syria in 2015.

The threat of rebellion forced the lifelong opponent of war and former president of the Stop the War Coalition into allowing Labour MPs to vote in favour of bombing.

But it's not the only example. Labour's history is full of times the left has tried to “reclaim” the party from the right, only to be tamed by them. Take what

happened to the movement behind Tony Benn in the 1980s.

In 1979, right wing Labour prime minister James Callaghan—who had enforced years of pay attacks on workers—took the party into an election on a right wing manifesto and lost.

He was replaced by Michael Foot, an MP from the soft left. Benn came close to being elected deputy leader in 1981.

Left wing members began fighting for democratic measures such as being allowed to reselect MPs.

They also won rule changes that gave members more say over who could be elected leader.

For some on the right this was too much. A group of four right wing MPs broke from Labour in 1981 to form the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

It posed a challenge to the Labour Party, almost defeating it in by elections in some seats previously considered “safe”.

Disrupt

Benn was told by the right that the left threatened to disrupt party unity and could cause Labour defeats.

So he agreed not to stand for deputy leader again.

What followed was the election of Neil Kinnock as Labour leader, and a witch hunt of the left. The shift to the right was completed by Tony Blair.

Under Blair, the right finally thought they could get rid of the problem of the members completely.

The election of Corbyn—and the attempts to hold MPs to account—are quite rightly an attempt by the membership to claw all that back.

But the idea that this is all that is needed can lead good activists down a dead end.

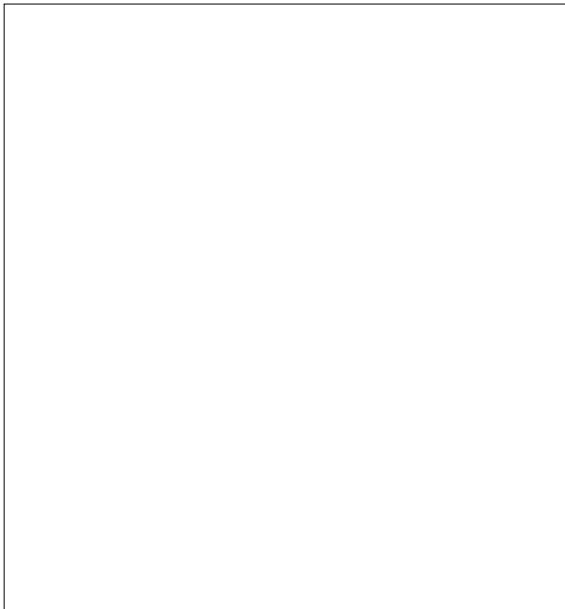
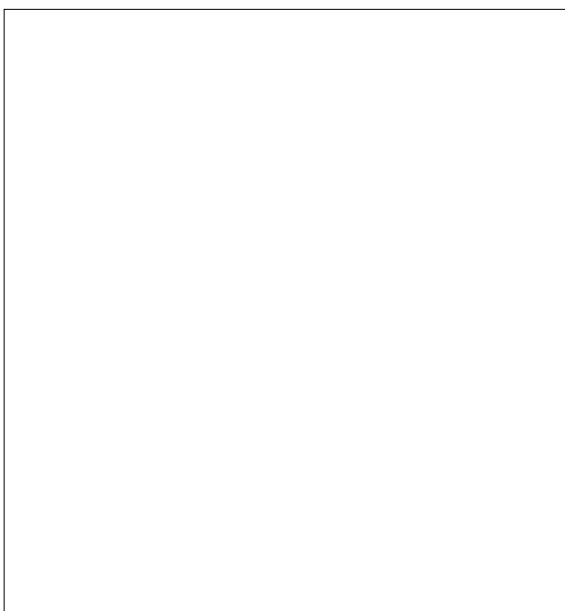
For years activists have tried to transform Labour by getting rid of the “Red Tories” at the top.

In practice this has meant getting locked into an endless battle for a party whose entire structure and orientation gives the right the controlling hand.

Rather than breaking from the right, you end up strapped to them inside the same organisation.

This isn't a message of despair. There is an alternative to the right—and one that can see off challenges such as the Independent Group.

But it lies outside the Labour Party. For as long as politics



A POLL showed the splitters getting some support (above) Campaigning during election is a big part of Labour's political activity (below)

is focused on Labour splits or interminable Brexit wrangling via opaque parliamentary procedure, the right can make the running.

It's their natural terrain—and the only pressure on Corbyn is the one that pulls him to the right.

When there's action by ordinary people outside of parliament, suddenly there's an alternative.

The walkouts by thousands of school students this month were a breakthrough not just because the people involved were young and energetic. They also showed politics can be different—and that there's another way to change society.

Action like that really can make people such as Chuka Umunna and Luciana Berger insignificant.

READ MORE

● **Right wing split is reheated Blairism**

by Nick Clark
bit.ly/ReheatedBlair

● **Making sense of Labour**

bit.ly/LabourSense

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**FOCUS ON
RACISM**

Why there's nothing funny about using blackface

Behind the make-up lies mockery. This racist practice should not be excused, argues **Ken Olende**

DEFENDERS OF whites blacking their faces often say it is harmless humour. But modern blackface originates in US minstrel shows, developed to defend segregation and slavery.

Recently the Gucci luxury fashion brand produced a jumper which, when pulled over the wearer's lower head, looks like blackface.

In the early 19th century the only “black” people regularly seen on the stage in the US were whites in blackface playing foolish servants.

This moved to another level when the “father of American minstrelsy” Thomas Dartmouth Rice first performed as “Jim Crow” in New York around 1830.

Rice blackened his face and dressed in tattered clothing to mimic a Southern slave and danced as a buffoon.

It is no coincidence that the use of blackface emerged at the same time as the anti-slavery movement became a threat. Nat Turner led his slave rebellion in Virginia, and the anti-slavery newspaper The Liberator was launched in 1831. The term “Underground Railroad” for the slaves' escape route was coined in about 1840.

Presenting

Rice was a great success, touring the US and Britain. By 1845 a whole industry of presenting black people to white audiences as lazy, happy and stupid was in place.

With time mocking slaves' tattered clothes shifted to laughing at the “dandified coon” dressed in fine clothes above his station.

Minstrel culture demeaned and debased all black people. Alternative traditions of black people proudly celebrating their culture emerged in the years of Reconstruction after slavery was abolished at the end of the Civil War.

The Fisk Jubilee Singers



BLACKFACE IS treated as a historical anomaly (left), but is still used today by organisations such as fashion brand Gucci (above)

successful “coon song” in 1896, “All Coons Look Alike to Me”.

Minstrel shows remained enormously popular through the early twentieth century.

Hollywood took up all the stereotypes. Remember that the first talkie in 1927, The Jazz Singer featured Al Jolson—in blackface.

Patronising

In Britain both the style and the patronising racism were popularised by music hall performers including GH Elliot, billed as the “chocolate-coloured coon”.

BBC TV launched its prime time Black and White Minstrel Show in the summer of 1958, the year of the Notting Hill race riots.

The Black and White Minstrels were on a bill topped by Motown giants Diana Ross and the Supremes at the 1968 Royal Variety Performance in London. At the dress rehearsal, several came into the wings, still in blackface, to watch the Supremes.

“When Diana Ross saw us she refused to carry on until we'd cleared the auditorium,” minstrel Les Want recalled. “As we left the stage she gave the Black Power salute. Then it all came home.”

A growing anti-racist movement made these racist stereotypes unacceptable, and that's how they should stay.



A growing anti-racist movement made stereotypes unacceptable

Police 'did nothing' says bereaved dad

by SADIE ROBINSON

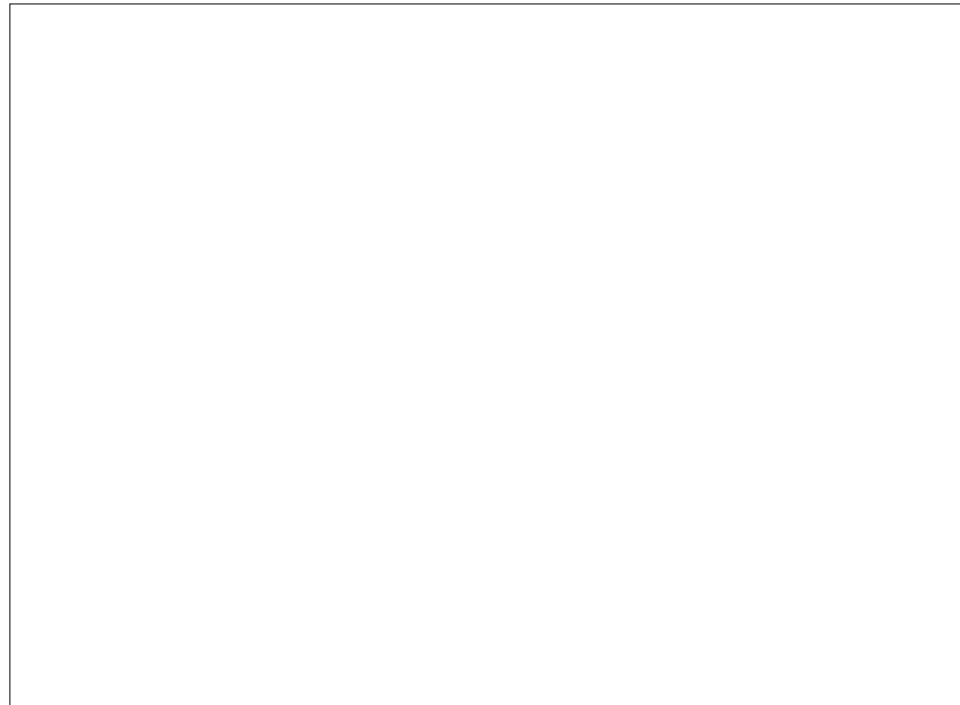
A FATHER whose two daughters died in the Hillsborough disaster was told by a police officer to "shut your fucking prattle" as he appealed for help.

Trevor Hicks was in pen 2 while a crush developed in adjacent pen 3, where his daughters Sarah and Vicki were. He told Preston Crown Court that he was "very concerned" about how full the pen was and tried to alert a police officer.

Some 96 Liverpool fans died as a result of the 1989 disaster. It followed a crush in pens 3 and 4 at the Leppings Lane end of the Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough stadium.

David Duckenfield was police match commander on the day. He faces 95 charges of manslaughter by gross negligence. Duckenfield can't be charged over the death of the 96th victim, Tony Bland, as Bland died four years after the disaster.

Graham Mackrell, then Sheffield Wednesday club safety officer, faces two



THE HILLSBOROUGH stadium in Sheffield

charges relating to safety breaches. Both men deny the charges.

After the game was stopped, Hicks had to decide whether to go with Vicki to a hospital or stay with Sarah.

He told the court it was "probably the worst moment of my life".

Barry Devonside's son Christopher also died in the disaster. He said officers checked their tickets at the

ground for previous football matches, but not on the day of the disaster.

Devonside added that a "cavalcade" of officers stood on the halfway line "doing nothing to help".

The court heard that an officer told Devonside a "bare faced blatant lie" that Chris wasn't in the gym, where bodies were taken.

Devonside visited hospitals and two mortuaries before he returned to the gym at 11pm to learn that "Chris had been there all that time".

Dolores Steele's son Philip died in the disaster. She told the court last week that fans shouted that people were dying but "nothing seemed to be getting done about it".

The court heard that police prevented her from going into the gym to look for Philip.

Liverpool fan Ian Mullins said it seemed police were confused and that it was left to fans to respond to the disaster.

Escape

Police officer Brian Walton was on duty at Hillsborough. He said that when fans climbed over the fencing to escape the pens some officers pushed them back.

"I realised that too many people had been allowed into the area," he said.

The court was read evidence from former police inspector David Bullas.

He described a pre-match briefing from Duckenfield as "well organised and clearly presented".

Former inspector Peter Darling said officers on the pitch were expected to monitor the crowd in the pens to identify problems.

He recalled no instructions being given to officers trying to help fans in the pens, but said there were radio problems.

John Nesbit was a chief superintendent working in the traffic division on the day of the disaster. He later went to the ground as a football supporter.

Nesbit heard there were problems and went to pen 3. He saw fans with their faces pressed to the fence. He helped clear a gate to the pen, and instructed officers to form a chain to pass people out of the pen.

He also instructed another officer to use a loudhailer to ask fans to move back, and another to make a Tannoy announcement for people not to leave the stadium so access routes were kept clear for emergency services.

The trial continues.

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Haiti—the corruption and the scandal behind the protests

Huge protests and strikes have swept the Caribbean country of Haiti. It's a revolt against the corruption and imperialism that has impoverished ordinary people, writes **Alistair Farrow**

PROTESTS HAVE shaken Haiti and demanded the president, Jovenel Moïse, step down.

He has not gone, yet, but has been forced to make concessions including “a wide range of measures” to alleviate poverty.

But Haitians know from centuries of bitter experience not to trust those who claim to act in their name.

Moïse has used brutal force to put down the protests.

When protesters threw stones at his house earlier in February police opened fire, killing at least one person.

Many more have been killed over the course of the protests, and police have been killed in retaliation.

A scandal about the Haitian ruling class's corrupt use of funds from an international oil deal is at the centre of the protests.

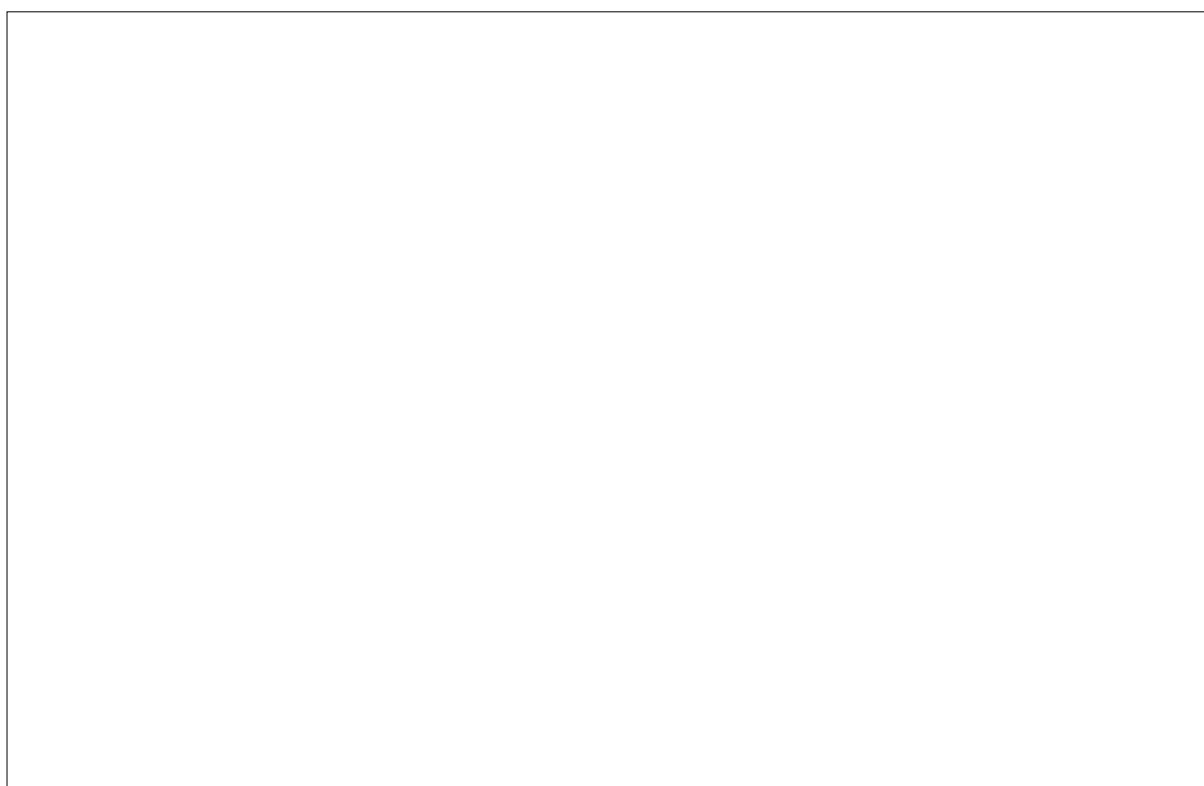
The PetroCaribe agreement was signed between the Venezuelan government and 17 other countries in the Caribbean and Latin America. It allows these countries access to Venezuelan oil and cheap loans.

Suffered

The deal was an attempt to break the US strategy of isolating Venezuela and forge bonds between countries that suffered under the yoke of US imperialism. It was at least partially successful.

In Haiti the agreement allowed the state to access Venezuelan oil without having to pay for all of it for 25 years. The Haitian state could then sell the oil internally and use the money to fund infrastructure projects.

This is how it worked for the five years after 2006 when Rene Preval was elected as president. Preval had been a protege of Jean-Bertrand Aristide,



PROTESTERS IN the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince

the former president who was twice removed by US-backed coups (see right). After a devastating earthquake in 2010 the US effectively took control of Haiti.

Preval's preferred candidate was pushed aside to make way for Michel Martelly, who quickly went to work creaming off the PetroCaribe account.

The money from the scheme was central to the Haitian economy. Once it started drying up it had a ripple effect, playing an important role

in the economic crisis gripping the country today.

In 2017 two investigations ordered by members of the Haitian senate implicated Martelly's prime minister Laurent Lamothe.

The investigations found that states of emergency had been used to push through laws which did not require full transparency when dealing with PetroCaribe money.

This meant there were two opportunities for corruption—in distributing the oil and in allocating the

money generated. Over £3 billion is missing—a huge figure in a country as desperately poor as Haiti. And Moïse's government has so far refused to prosecute anyone involved in the scandal.

It has gone on scams to line the pockets of crooks—£15 million for an airport no one can land on, for instance.

And almost £3 million went on 100 new police vehicles—money that came from a fund specifically set aside for disaster relief after successive hurricanes since 2006.

Coups and blackmail

WHY WAS the US so keen to get rid of Jean-Bertrand Aristide?

There's a hint of how dangerous he was for the US in a 2007 interview he did with the Marxist philosopher Peter Hallward.

“It isn't a matter of struggling for the people, on behalf of the people, at a distance from the people—it's a matter of struggling with and in the midst of the people,” he said.

Aristide was a part of the movement in the 1980s which swept the dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier—“Baby Doc”—from power in 1986.

Aristide was overthrown by coups both in 1991 and 2004.

The coup in 2004 was backed by the US—Aristide was flown out of Haiti on a US plane in what he described as a kidnapping.

It followed his demands in 2003 for reparations from France, Haiti's former colonial owner.

From 2001 right wing paramilitary groups based in the Dominican Republic, next door to Haiti, launched raids into the country. They are alleged to have received training from US and French special forces.

A conference held in Canada in 2003 discussed the future of Haiti—with no Haitian representative present. According to one report of the conference, regime change was discussed openly.

The coups, violence and restrictions forced Aristide to accept an economic programme that made Haiti's people even poorer. His party came to rely on violence to put down dissent.

A history of US invasions, violence and interference

THE SPECTRE of US intervention and invasion is a constant threat in Haiti. Successive administrations have attacked the country in opposition to democratic movements (see right).

In 1915 US president and well known racist Woodrow Wilson ordered an occupation of Haiti. It came after a huge movement overthrew the US-friendly dictator Jean Vilbrun Guillaume Sam.

The revolutionary wave threatened US interests in the country. The purpose of the invasion was to

“re-establish peace and order,” according to Wilson.

Wilson also wanted to rewrite the Haitian constitution, which banned the foreign ownership of land. The occupation went on until 1934.

One century later it should come as no surprise that the US is up to its old tricks, and that the same excuses are used.

On Wednesday of last week eight heavily-armed men were arrested in the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince. Most of them were US citizens. Among them were ex-Navy Seals



Weapons found with the eight men on a “government mission”

and special forces-types. Satellite communications equipment was found in the pickup truck they drove.

The eight men reportedly told Haitian authorities when arrested they were “on a government mission”.

This was an attempt by the US to capitalise on the chaos created by the protests against Moïse to push its own agendas.

The eight were put on a plane back to Miami, where they faced no charges and were debriefed by the FBI.

IN BRIEF

Bosses have tested workers' patience

WORKERS AT the Scottish Qualifications Authority schools exam board could be headed for strikes over managements' attempts to restructure their workplace.

Hundreds of Unite union members have returned a 96 percent vote of no confidence in the management on an 84 percent turnout.

The restructuring process has left some of the workers without specific job roles. It's the third time bosses have attempted to restructure since 2013.

Workers are also angry about an internal grievance process where names of individual trade unionists were leaked.

Alison Maclean, Unite regional industrial officer, said, "In our opinion, the workforce is being harassed and intimidated by the actions of senior management. They are attempting to deflect from their own mismanagement."

Sacked cleaner wins at tribunal

AN EMPLOYMENT tribunal has found that a cleaner sacked by the high street Topshop store on Oxford Street in London was unfairly dismissed.

Maria Susana Benavidez Guaman could be entitled to as much as £75,000 in compensation after Judge David Pearl's ruling.

Fight to save rail depot in Glasgow

RAIL WORKERS protested outside Edinburgh Waverley train station and the Scottish parliament last week over plans to close Springburn rail depot.

RMT union members are fighting to save 200 jobs at the ScotRail maintenance depot in Glasgow.

Mick Cash, RMT general secretary, called the plans "an act of industrial vandalism" and "another example of the fragmentation of the privatised rail industry".

Offshore workers vote for strikes

OVER 200 offshore oil workers in the North Sea have returned huge votes for strikes over changes to shift rotations and terms and conditions.

Bosses at oil firms Aker and Petrofac want workers to work three weeks on the rig, and three or four weeks off.

The Unite union members currently operate on a two weeks on, two weeks off shift pattern.

The action is set to hit Elgin-Franklin, Shetland Gas Plant, North Alwyn and Dunbar platforms.

All returned votes of over 88 percent for action.

WORKERS' RIGHTS



RMT, PCS, IWGB and UUV union members held a demonstration against outsourcing and for workers' rights in central London on Tuesday

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

HIGHER EDUCATION

Universities ballot is a sign of growing anger

by SADIE ROBINSON

UCU UNION members in universities have voted for strikes over pay—but missed the 50 percent threshold needed for legal walkouts.

Some 70 percent of those who voted backed strikes while over 80 percent supported action short of strikes. The turnout was 41 percent.

Carlo Morelli is a UCU rep at Dundee university and sits on the union's national executive committee.

He told Socialist Worker that the turnout was "very, very good".

"We clearly would have had a serious strike on our hands with that sort of turnout," he said.

Solid

"It shows there is a very solid core of members who want to take action on this stuff. People know that the employers can afford to pay more."

Jo McNeill, UCU Left candidate to be the union's vice president, said workers had delivered "the highest turnout result this union has ever seen in postal pay ballots".

She added that it was a "significant increase on past



UCU union members at universities struck over pensions last spring

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

pay ballot turnouts". "If we didn't have to jump this 50 percent Tory turnout hurdle, we would be celebrating and preparing to take action," she said.

The ballot involved around 70,000 workers across 143 universities.

It asked workers to vote for action over pay, the gender pay gap, insecure contracts and workloads.

The UCU said the vote showed "continuing anger about casualisation, workload and pay inequality".

But it said the turnout was "disappointingly short" of the 50 percent threshold.

Carlo said, "Now we have to have a discussion about how

we organise a national pay campaign.

"We can't give up on fighting over pay or equality."

■VOTING IN UCU elections ends on Friday of this week.

The UCU Left, which Socialist Worker supports, is backing Jo McNeill for vice president, and a number of candidates for other positions. ●Go to uculeft.org for details

■THE UCU London Region has called a national organising meeting for activists in central London on Saturday 2 March.

It takes place from 12 noon until 3pm at University College London, 1-19 Torrington Place, London WC1E 7HB.

CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS

'Cuts harm claimants'—Universal Credit workers

WORKERS IN the West Midlands who manage people's claims for the Universal Credit benefit are gearing up to strike over workload.

Members of the PCS union in Walsall and Wolverhampton are set to strike on 11 and 12 March.

They say understaffing is causing a backlog of work—meaning claims and payments can be delayed. This causes misery for claimants.

PCS activists report that the volume of calls to the centres means workers have little time to complete their caseload.

One activist told Socialist Worker the backlog meant "claimants aren't getting the service they deserve".

"But to make the department listen we're

going to have to have an impact on the calls," they said.

■A BALLOT for strikes by security workers at parliament was set to end on Thursday of this week.

PCS union members are demanding the reinstatement of a colleague, and also want issues over rest breaks resolved.

■WORKERS AT an HMRC tax office in Ealing, west London, are balloting for action against the closure of their office.

The planned closure means workers face the threat of redundancy if they are unable to travel to new workplaces several miles away.

The ballot is set to end on Tuesday of next week.

SCHOOLS

Colleges in Hertfordshire could join pay walkouts

UCU UNION members at Oaklands College in Hertfordshire are balloting for strikes over pay. The ballot ends on 11 March.

A yes vote would see workers in St Albans and Welwyn Garden City join a third wave of college pay strikes in March.

UCU members at 13 colleges struck in February over pay in the second wave of action.

The first took place last November, when workers at six colleges struck. UCU members at Tower Hamlets and Redbridge colleges in east London are also balloting and could join the walkouts. Their ballots were to end on Friday of this week.

■WORKERS AT Shrewsbury Colleges Group were set to strike on Wednesday and Thursday of this week over lesson observation policy.

The NEU union suspended a previous walkout planned for 12 February for talks.

It has since rejected a new proposal from management.

NEU rep Jean Evanson told Socialist Worker, "NEU members at Shrewsbury College Group are striking against graded lesson observations."

"Research shows that grading is subjective and unreliable."

"It leads to stress and anxiety in teachers. Those who are graded harshly lose confidence and this can result in significant mental health issues."

"We must fight to defend the mental health of teachers."

●Send messages of support to jean.evanson@neu.org.uk

■UCU UNION members at Blackburn College are to be balloted for industrial action.

Job cuts have led to increased workloads and stress.

The Unison union is also intending to ballot its members.

SCHOOLS

School strikes to stop academy plans

WORKERS AT Granville Academy in Derbyshire struck on Tuesday against "adverse management practices".

The NASUWT union members are in dispute over a number of policies including lesson observations, performance management and disciplinary procedures.

They held a successful walkout on 14 February and plan more strikes on Wednesday and Thursday of next week.

■A PLANNED pay strike by NASUWT union members at schools across Jersey was suspended after talks. The walkout had been set to take place on Tuesday.

■NEU union members at Galliard Primary school in Enfield, north London, began a three-day strike on Tuesday.

Workers are fighting academisation. ●Send messages of solidarity to susan.oshea@neu.org.uk

■NASUWT union members at the Together Trust in Cheadle, Stockport, struck on Tuesday.

It was the first of six planned walkouts against attacks on teachers' pay and for union recognition.

The action hit Ashcroft School and Ashcroft College in the trust.

NEU union members at Inscape House School, also part of the Together Trust, also began a three-day strike on Tuesday.

SCOTLAND

Scots teachers reject offer

MEMBERS OF the EIS Scottish teaching union have voted to reject a recent pay offer.

Some 57 percent voted to reject on an 81 percent turnout.

The union will now move to negotiations. But if there is no improved offer a strike ballot could start in March.

A possible strike day is 24 April, with further action in June. The argument for

strikes is new to many EIS members. The last time there was a national teaching strike in Scotland was under Margaret Thatcher.

This ballot will need a concerted effort by activists to win the vote nationally.

Around 30,000 school teachers marched in Glasgow last year. It shows that there is a mood to fight over pay. **Charlotte Ahmed**

NHS

Hospital workers on strike for equal pay

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

OUTSOURCED health workers in Liverpool took to the picket line on Monday in their fight for equal pay.

The 40 cleaners, porters and other support staff work for multinational OCS.

The Unison union members at Liverpool Women's Hospital are demanding the same rate of pay as workers employed directly by the NHS.

Stephanie Mahoney, a Unison member and domestic, said it was difficult to get by on the minimum wage of just £7.83 an hour.

"It's a real struggle to cope on the wage that I'm on," she explained.

Bills

"I'm a single parent and I need to keep a roof over my son's head. Gas and food bills keep going up for everyone, but it's harder for us to make ends meet."

She added, "I sometimes work alongside colleagues who are paid £9 an hour, but we're doing the same work."

OCS staff are not on the NHS Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales—where the lowest rate is £8.93 an hour.

This means some of them are up to £2,150 a year worse off than workers who are doing similar jobs but directly employed by the NHS.



ENTHUSIASTIC PICKETING on Monday

PICTURE: PAULA BARKER ON TWITTER

Maria Moss, Unison's north west regional organiser, said, "OCS is a profitable global business and they should pay all their staff at Liverpool Women's Hospital the NHS rate for the job."

Nurses, midwives and other hospital workers joined the OCS strikers on the picket lines before their shifts began in the morning.

Stephanie said, "Colleagues are very supportive of us taking action to get this sorted out because they don't think

it is right that we're on lower pay than them."

Pressure has forced some outsourced companies at other hospitals to sign up to AfC pay and terms and conditions. A two-day strike by Unison members made bosses pay up at the Royal Bolton Hospital, Greater Manchester, last October.

They worked for "wholly-owned subsidiary" iFM Bolton Ltd, a privately-registered company

owned by the NHS trust. Workers at the Liverpool Women's Hospital showed that they are determined to fight when they voted by 100 percent for strikes.

As Stephanie said, "I've never been on strike before but I can't see how else this is ever going to change. We're all sticking together."

Every trade unionist should support their fight for equal pay.

● Tweet messages of support to @NorthWestUNISON

CARE WORKERS

660 care workers fight for an alternative future

UP TO 660 care workers are set to strike on Saturday and Sunday of this week to defend their pay.

The Unison union members work for Alternative Futures Group (AFG), which wants to slash their overnight pay.

Bosses are able to carry out these attacks because of a High Court ruling. It said care workers could be paid a flat rate for overnight work, rather than an hourly minimum wage.

Workers are set to lose up to £2,000 under the plans, and could earn just £40 for a nine-hour shift.

A ballot for strikes returned a result of 87 percent for action.

The strikes will hit workplaces across the

north west of England. AFG bosses are blaming "insufficient funding" from local authorities for its commission services.

It also said it would attempt legal action to block the strikes. But Unison say AFG is getting the same level of funding from councils.

Workers should resist any attempts to chip away at their pay in the name of Tory spending cuts and austerity.

Join strike rallies on 2 March

- Liverpool—1pm, St George's Hall steps, LJ 1JJ
- Burnley—11am, St James Street, BB11
- Rochdale—10am, Peace Garden, The Esplanade, OL16 1AB
- Tameside—10am, Ashton Town Hall, OL6 6DL

COUNCIL CUTS

Protests across Scotland

PROTESTERS gathered outside Glasgow city hall last Thursday as the Scottish National Party (SNP)-led council passed £22 million in cuts plus a 3 percent rise in the council tax.

Unions, including Unison and the GMB, met before the meeting to call for a one-year no cuts budget.

Brian Smith, branch secretary of Glasgow City Unison, said, "We've had ten years of austerity now."

"Services are getting poorer, communities are suffering."

"We're looking for the councillors to fight back."

"We've argued that they have the mechanisms under their control to set a one year no cuts budget."

Members of the Save

Whitehill Pool campaign also gathered before the meeting. Campaigner Deborah Hamilton said, "We'd planned to be here today because initially we thought our pool was on the list for closure."

"We've been told by the SNP that they would not put our pool forward for cuts."

"We're not just wanting our pool to stay this year, we're wanting it for years to come."

■ **SECONDARY** school students staged protests and walkouts at several schools in Argyll and Bute last week over plans to cut services for young people.

Strikes took place at six schools for 15 minutes after break time on Wednesday of last week.

POSTAL WORKERS

Royal Mail walkouts against bullying

POSTAL WORKERS at Royal Mail delivery offices in Manchester and Bangor, Northern Ireland, have struck against management behaviour.

CWU union members at both offices voted to strike after bosses took disciplinary action against workers that the union said was unfair.

Workers in Wythenshawe, Manchester, struck last Friday and on Monday of this week.

Two workers there have been disciplined—one for reporting sick with stress and another for complaining on social media of management bullying.

The CWU North West region reported on the first day of the strike, "Good humoured picket line. Shame some managers feel the need to stand and stare



Determined to stand up for workers' rights in Wythenshawe

at people who are forced to strike because management haven't tackled the toxic culture in their office."

In Bangor two delivery workers were handed two-year suspended dismissals for alleged "non-completion of a duty."

The two strikes follow a series of unofficial walkouts

at delivery offices across Britain against bullying and harassment by managers.

An agreement signed between Royal Mail and the CWU in 2018 promised a "change in culture" from management.

But workers have seen no change and the agreement could break down.

HOUSING

HOUSING campaigners have forced the Peabody housing association to back down from selling a house this week. They staged a "people's viewing" of a housing association home in Tower Hamlets, east London, on Monday.

Peabody had said it wanted to sell it off because it would cost too much to refurbish it before renting it out.

Activists were shown around the house on Monday morning, and were shocked to see hardly any work needed to be done.

"They're selling this house off for £730,000," said housing campaigner Glyn Robbins.

The next day it was withdrawn from sale.

Campaigners pressured Tower Hamlets Labour mayor John Biggs to write to Peabody about the sell-off.

Two more Peabody homes that had been set to be auctioned off have been taken down from the auction website since recent protests.

EDINBURGH



No more cuts say Edinburgh protesters

PICTURE: UNISON CITY OF EDINBURGH

PROTESTS TOOK place last week as Edinburgh council passed £30 million cuts.

No party controls the council, but the leader is from the Scottish National Party.

Unison union Edinburgh branch spokesperson John Stevenson said, "These cuts come on top of the loss of 1,000 jobs and the threat of hundreds more as the

council faces an additional shortfall of £98 million in the next few years.

"We call on councillors to defend local services, challenge the Scottish government for more funds and not just administer cuts"

Edinburgh Unison lead negotiator Tom Connolly said, "The government must stop handing down austerity to councils."

CORBYN BACKS DOWN ON BREXIT

by NICK CLARK

THE LABOUR Party's left wing leaders have given in to pressure from the right to support calls for a second Brexit referendum.

Leader Jeremy Corbyn announced a shift in policy to a meeting of Labour MPs on Monday evening, suggesting it was preparing to back a "public vote".

The leadership tried to spin its shift on Brexit as representing no change at all.

A press statement released by Labour and promoted by some left wing websites only said that Labour had submitted an amendment with its alternative Brexit plan.

But Corbyn's office briefed journalists that, when this fails, Labour would support a second referendum.

Confirmed

The move was confirmed by shadow Brexit secretary Keir Starmer, who also said Labour would want Remain as an option.

Corbyn's move does not ensure that the call for a second referendum will go

through parliament. Dozens of Labour MPs are likely to vote against it, and few Tories for it.

But the right see Corbyn's concession as a step towards overturning the 2016 vote to leave the neoliberal European Union. The announcement

was the culmination of a long campaign to force Corbyn to give in.

He came under intense pressure from leading figures in Labour.

Deputy leader Tom Watson demanded that Corbyn "address the reasons

why good colleagues might want to leave".

It was a threat that, unless Corbyn gave the right what they wanted, more resignations and turmoil would follow.

And within minutes of Monday's announcement,

right wingers were already attacking Corbyn for not openly opposing Brexit.

Corbyn has been gradually backed into a corner over Brexit by trying to defeat the Tories and the right through parliamentary manoeuvres.

This has helped Theresa

May cling on to office, and allowed the right to present opposing Brexit as the only way of stopping the Tories.

Labour's move on the referendum is a rare piece of good news for May.

It could persuade more of her MPs to back her deal for fear of losing Brexit entirely.

Overtake

Alternatively she could pose falsely as the friend of democracy against those who now want to overturn it.

And the far right will be delighted if a second referendum gives them the chance to pretend they are the face of anti-elitism.

Meanwhile ordinary people are treated as spectators to a major political crisis.

Labour needs an alternative Brexit plan based on opposition to austerity and racism.

It should champion renationalisation, and spending on wages, jobs and services.

But above all it needs action by ordinary people on the streets and in the workplaces to break the Tories and the Labour right.

TRYING TO hold it together—Corbyn has made yet another sacrifice to the right in Labour

The EU protects business, not workers and the poor

LABOUR'S MOVE on the referendum is a success for big businesses that are fighting to block Brexit.

The Labour right frame opposing Brexit as a way of challenging the Tories.

In reality they want to remain in the European Union (EU).

It enforces pro-privatisation, pro-free market rules supported by most of big business in Britain.

Trading

The EU promotes the interests of big business and the bosses.

It was set up as a capitalist trading bloc—and it will remain so.

Membership of the EU

depends on sticking to its pro-market policies. So, for instance, even though an EU country could own a single rail company, rules demanding market

competition mean it could never nationalise the entire industry.

While defenders of the EU talk of "international solidarity"—the EU

enforces austerity on Greece and builds borders that force refugees to make dangerous sea crossings, many to drown there.

The original vote to leave the EU was contradictory.

Suffered

But at its heart was a kick against the establishment by ordinary people who have suffered years of attacks on their jobs, wages and services.

Corbyn had rightly held out against a second referendum.

It would be viewed by the millions of Labour voters who supported Brexit as siding with the elite.

Labour plan mirrors May's

LABOUR'S alternative Brexit plan is itself a concession to the right.

The fact that it has had backing from senior European Union (EU) figures and top bosses is a bad sign.

It calls for a customs union that would almost certainly stop Britain from making independent trade deals separate from those negotiated by the EU.

Another point calls for "close

alignment with the single market, underpinned by shared institutions and obligations".

This is similar to May's Chequer's Plan that emerged last summer before being torpedoed by the Tories and the EU at a later stage.

If Labour decides it wishes to be fully in the single market, the EU will insist it signs up to state-aid rules. These rule out wholesale nationalisation of sectors and limit intervention in businesses.



Theresa May tried and failed to win backing for her deal at Chequers

The EU has driven brutal austerity in countries such as Greece